

# THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

## Hong Kong Secondary Schools Music Education with Special Reference to Changing Curricula in the Years of 1998 to 2009

Being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
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# Hong Kong Secondary Schools Music Education

## with Special Reference to Music Curricula

### in the years of 1998 to 2009

<b>Contents</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>Figures and Tables</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>xv</b>

#### **Chapter 1: Introduction to the Research – Outline of the Aims and Purposes of the Study**

Introduction	1
1.1 A Comparison between the Numbers of HKCEE and HKALE Music Candidates and Art Candidates	1
1.2 Three Aims of the Study	4
1.3 Two Assumptions of the Study	7
1.4 Limitations of the Study	11
1.5 Model to be Followed	12
1.6 Summary of this Chapter	13

## **Chapter 2: A Review of the Influence of Hong Kong Education Development, Policy and Curriculum on Secondary School Music Curriculum 15**

Introduction	15
2.1 Education in Hong Kong	15
2.1.1 Traditional Chinese Education	15
2.1.2 The Influences of Chinese Education Doctrine in Hong Kong Education	18
2.1.3 Development of Education in Hong Kong: East meets West	19
2.2 Six Important Education Policy Making Bodies in Hong Kong	22
2.3 Music Education Policy in Secondary Schools in Hong Kong	25
2.3.1 Education Commission Report, no. 1, October 1984	27
2.3.2 Education Commission Report, no. 2, August 1986	31
2.3.3 Education Commission Report, no. 3, June 1988 and Education Commission Report, no. 4, November 1990	33
2.3.4 Education Commission Report, no. 5, June 1992	38
2.3.5 Education Commission Report, no. 6, March 1996 and Education Commission Report, no. 7, September 1997	40
2.4 Summary of Education Commission Reports Numbers 1 to 5 and 7	41
2.5 Aims and Values of Music Education	44
2.5.1 Educated by Music	45
2.5.2 Personal Development: Values Promoted by Music Education	47
2.5.3 The Position of Music in the Curriculum and as a Recreational Subject	48
2.5.4 The Effects of Musical Nurture on Personal Disposition, Morality and Virtues	50

2.5.5	Conflicts which Occur in Secondary School Music Curriculum in Hong Kong	
	----- and Music Curricula Unlinked with Local Tertiary Education	57
2.6	Value of Music Education: From the Point of View of International	
	Prospective in the Future	61
2.6.1	U.K., U.S., and Japan	62
2.6.2	Africa	65
2.6.3	Italy	66
2.6.4	Germany	66
2.6.5	Sweden	67
2.6.6	Hong Kong	68
2.7	Summary of this Chapter	69

### **Chapter 3: Secondary Schools Music Education and Music Curriculum in Hong Kong**

		71
Introduction		71
3.1	Music Education and Relevant Component Elements of the Present Hong Kong Secondary School Music Curriculum	72
3.1.1	Form 1 to Form 3 Music Textbooks	75
3.1.2	HKCEE and HKALE Music Syllabi	77
3.1.3	HKCEE and HKALE Music Past Year Examination Papers	85
3.1.4	HKCEE and HKALE Music Examination Reports: 2000	87
3.2	The Way in which Music Curriculum is Covered and Operating in Different Cultural Environments – A Comparison of Hong Kong with England and Wales and Singapore	89
3.3	Significant Studies in the Field	91
3.3.1	Music and Culture: a General Study	91
3.3.2	Music as a School Subject: Amirize (1981)	94
3.3.3	Secondary School Music in Hong Kong: Foo (1973)	98
3.3.4	The Music Curriculum in the Primary and Secondary Schools of Hong Kong: Wong (1990)	103

3.3.5	The Curriculum of Music Education from the Viewpoint of Asia: Takazawa (1990) – a Treatment of Western Music and Traditional Music	104
3.3.6	Hong Kong Secondary School Music Curriculum – Constructing Marginality 1997: Ng (1997)	107
3.3.7	Intentions and Constraints in Hong Kong Secondary Schools Music Curriculum: Ng and Morris (1998)	113
3.3.8	The 1998 Document “Secondary School Music Course (form 1 to form 3): A Combination Brief Report of Questionnaire Investigation” (S.S.M.C.)	116
3.3.8.1	Music Curriculum in the Secondary School	117
3.3.8.2	The Number of Secondary School Music Teachers	118
3.3.8.3	Teaching Resources for Secondary School Music Classroom	119
3.3.8.4	Music Teachers in Secondary School	120
3.3.8.5	Music in the Secondary School Classroom	121
3.3.8.6	Secondary School Music – Classroom Music Activities and the Scope of Learning Scope	123
3.3.8.7	In-Service Training for Secondary School Music Teachers	124
3.3.8.8	Seven Points Implied by the S.S.M.C. Document	125
3.3.8.9	The Proposed 2001 ‘New’ Music Syllabus	127
3.3.9	International Prospective on Music Education and Music Curriculum	128
3.4	Summary of this Chapter	134

<b>Chapter 4: The Concept of Arts Education as Opposed to the Study of Music as a Separate Subject</b>	<b>136</b>
Introduction	136
4.1 Policy and the Nature of Music Study: the Journal Arts Education Policy Review, (A.E.P.R.) July / August 2002 (New York)	137
4.2 The New Proposed “Arts Education” for HKCEE / HKALE Students Starting in 2005 – Consultation Document <i>Learning to Learn – Key Learning Area: Arts Education</i>	140
4.2.1 Learning from the Arts Education introduced in Brazil in 1971: the Context of Music Education	147
4.2.2 Prospective Suggestions for Arts Education in Hong Kong: based on a U.K. Research Report on Arts Education in Secondary School	149

4.3	The Changing Role of Secondary School Music Teachers in Hong Kong	152
4.3.1	Required Knowledge for the HKCEE / HKALE Music Teachers	155
4.3.2	The Importance of School Principals' Support for School Music Teachers	156
4.3.3	A Critical Approach to Integrated Curricula	157
4.4	Summary of this Chapter – Issues and Objectives Raised from this Research	160
4.4.1	Eleven Issues Suggested for this Research	160
4.4.2	Five Objectives of this Research	161
<b>Chapter 5: Methodology and Research Design</b>		<b>162</b>
Introduction		162
5.1	Aims of the Study	163
5.2	Research Methodology: Aim at a True Measure	163
5.2.1	Quantitative Research	164
5.2.2	Qualitative Research	165
5.2.3	Research Methods Adopted in this Study	166
5.3	Research Instruments of this Study	167
5.3.1	Questionnaire	169
5.3.2	Interview	171
5.4	Approaches of Analysis	173
5.5	Hypotheses of this Study	173
5.5.1	Administration of the Research Instrument on Data Collection	
	Planning of the Study	175
5.5.2	Survey Instruments – Working Procedures of this Study	177
5.5.3	Fieldwork: Centralized Scheme and Visiting the Teachers' Center	180
5.6	Validity and Reliability	182
5.6.1	Validity	184
	5.6.1.1 Validity of the Questionnaires	185
	5.6.1.2 Validity of the Interviews	185
5.6.2	Reliability	185
	5.6.2.1 Reliability of the Questionnaires	186
	5.6.2.2 Reliability of the Interviews	186
5.7	Pilot Study and Sample Size	186
5.7.1	Location and Method of Pilot Study	188
5.7.2	Results of the Target Population and Sample of the Study	188

5.7.3	Results related to Questionnaires for Secondary Schools Principals and Music Teachers	189
5.8	Changes to Instruments as a Result of the Pilot Study	192
5.9	Information Announced in September 2000: an Additional Factor affecting the Research Direction	194
5.10	Summary of this Chapter: Research Methods Used for this Study	195
 <b>Chapter 6: Findings of the Research</b>		 196
	Introduction	196
6.1	The Distribution and Collection of the Questionnaires	196
6.2	The Report of the Questionnaires: Secondary School Principals	196
6.2.1	Principals: Table I – Responses for the 5 Null Hypotheses	198
6.2.2	Principals: Table II – Responses for the 6 Research Statements	206
6.3	The Report of the Questionnaires: Secondary School Music Teachers	211
6.3.1	Teachers: Table I – Responses for the 5 Null Hypotheses	213
6.3.2	Teachers: Table II – Responses for the 6 Research Statements	219
6.4	Influential Persons in the Field: the Report of the Interviews	221
6.5	Observation: a Visit of the Music Classroom in a Secondary School – with the Feedback of the HKCEE / HKALE Students	224
6.6	The Report of the HKCEE Student Questionnaires	229
6.6.1	HKCEE Students: Table I -- Responses for the 5 Null Hypotheses	230
6.6.2	HKCEE Students: Table II -- Responses for the 6 Research Statements	234
6.7	The Report of the HKALE Student Questionnaires	236
6.7.1	HKALE Students: Table I -- Responses for the 5 Null Hypotheses	237
6.7.2	HKALE Students: Table II -- Responses for the 6 Research Statements	241
6.8	A Comparison with New 2009 Syllabus	245
6.9	Supporting Document: Arts Education Key Learning Area – Music Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4 – 6)	246
6.10	Summary of this Chapter	248
 <b>Chapter 7: Analysis of Findings and Discussion</b>		 249
7.1	Evaluation of the Overall Findings	249
7.2	Findings and Theories	255

7.3	Data Analysis and a Comparison to the Results of Related Research	258
7.4	Comparison of the Research Results with Government Policy	266
7.5	Summary of this Chapter	267
<b>Chapter 8: Conclusions, Recommendations and Final Comments</b>		<b>269</b>
8.1	A Promising Learning Circumstances	269
8.2	A Sound Music Curriculum	269
8.3	Conclusions	276
8.4	Recommendations for Further Research	279
8.5	Further Limitations of the Study	281
8.6	Summary and Significance of the Study	282
<b>References</b>		<b>284</b>
<b>Appendices (I to XIII)</b>		<b>296</b>



### **Abstract**

The thesis explores issues relating to the secondary music examination curriculum in Hong Kong between 1998 and 2009. In 1998 the number of candidates taking ABRSM and TCL examinations was 50406 but HKALE and HKCEE, the candidate numbers were 18 at AL and 231 at CE level. This thesis seeks to explore reasons for the lack of interest and uptake by secondary school students of government music exams through an examination of the curriculum and proposed changes to it during the last 10 years.

This research, therefore, arises to study music education 1998 – 2009 and in particular to focus on proposed “developments” for 2002 and 2005 both of which were rejected. By 2010 the AL examination had been cancelled and the CE remains unchanged. The thesis explores the marginalization of an area of the school curriculum.

After a brief introduction to the research, chapter 2 gives a broad overview of education policy and curriculum development in secondary school music education in Hong Kong. Seven Education Commission Reports concerned with music education policy in secondary schools are examined.

Chapter 3 is a more detailed study of music education and the music curriculum in secondary schools in Hong Kong in which some significant studies and surveys in the field are studied. The S.S.M.C. report provides a useful and supporting back up to avoid any double work. In addition, the way in which music is covered and operated in the curriculum in different cultural environments (using the examples of England and Wales and Singapore) has been examined.

Chapter 4 discusses the issues raised from the research. Based on the information found, one of the main issues for this research is that the secondary school music teacher has the key role for a successful revolution in Hong Kong secondary music education.

Chapter 5 considers the hypotheses and methodologies. The research methods used are direct description with a simple statistical approach. Research methods used for this study include 5-Likert scales, summarizing content and constant comparative analysis. Furthermore, some tables, figures and documents are provided as a supplement.

Chapter 6 examines the data analysis. The results of this research are compared to the results of related researches in section 3.3. Feedback from target secondary school principals, music teachers, students and representative persons in the field is collected and reported.

Chapter 7 is the analysis of findings and discussion. The key finding is that most of the secondary school music teachers in Hong Kong do not encourage their students to take the HKCEE / HKALE music examinations. This study finds that, as music is neglected at schools, it is reaching a weak position in Hong Kong secondary schools, and its curriculum is threatened.

Chapter 8 gives the conclusions, recommendations for further research, limitations and significance of the study in terms of the principal theme. This is the first time any study has investigated the problem concerning secondary school music education

in Hong Kong during the years from 1998 to 2009. The answer to the final question raised from this research, whether the Arts Education curriculum being introduced in 2005 is a good substitute for the subject, is still uncertain at this moment.

## **Abbreviations**

ABRSM	Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music
CDC	Curriculum Development Committed
CDI	Curriculum Development Institute
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate for Secondary Education
HKALE	Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination
HKCEE	Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination
TCL	Trinity College of London

## Figures and Tables

<b>Figure / Table</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
1.1	Three Purposes Implicit in this Research	5
1.2	Research Policy Recommendation	10
2.1	The Objectives of the 7 Education Commission Reports	42
3.1	Learner, Teacher and Music	73
3.2	Approach to Music, forms 1 to 3 Music Textbooks	
	-- Contents of Lessons	76
3.3	Compulsory Papers for HKCEE Music Examination	79
3.4	Marks Award by ABRSM Results for HKCEE Music Examination	80
3.5	HKALE Music Syllabi	82
3.6	The Structure of AS (Advanced Supplementary Level) Music Examination	84
3.7	Singapore GCE Music Examination Components	90
3.8	Factors affect Parents' Choice of Extra Curricular Activities in Hong Kong	97
3.9	7 Most Common Activities in the Music Classrooms in Hong Kong	100
3.10	Primary and Secondary School Levels in Thailand	105
3.11	Techniques, Concepts and Forms of Expressions in Studying Music	107
3.12	Sources of Influence on the Music Curricula in Hong Kong	109
3.13	Constraints on Music as a School Subject	112

## Figures and Tables

Figure / Table	Contents	Page
3.14	Number of Music Teachers in Secondary School in Hong Kong	118
3.15	Average Number of Musical Instrument Provided in Secondary Schools	119
3.16	Average Number of Music Textbooks Used in Secondary Schools in Hong Kong	119
3.17	The Age of Secondary School Music Teachers	120
3.18	Secondary School Music Teachers' Idea about the Link Between Secondary and Primary Music Curricula	121
3.19	In-service Training for Secondary School Music Teachers	124
4.1	4 Learning Targets in Arts Education	143
4.2	Different Forms of Arts to be Included in the School Curriculum in Hong Kong	144
4.3	Curriculum Development for Different Stages of Schooling for Arts Education, forms 4-7 (Senior Secondary Level)	145
4.4	Learning Objectives Specific for Designed for Music	146
5.1	Planning on the Research	177

## **Figures and Tables**

<b>Figure / Table</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
7.1	Final Stages of Research Procedures	259
7.2	3 Aims of the Study and the Findings	260
7.3	5 Objectives of the Study and the Findings	261
7.4	Possible Solutions to the 7 Issues of this Study	262

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The resources used in this research are mainly selected from Hull University Library; Hong Kong University Library; Hong Kong Chinese University Library; Hong Kong City University; and a number of Hong Kong public libraries.

This piece of research has been prolonged for a number of reasons beside family issue: I nearly died in 2004 and had been concentrated on recovery for almost three years. Meanwhile, there were always hot debates about introducing a new music education syllabus for secondary schools in Hong Kong since 2002. However, the relevant contents of documents were being turned down at the end.



In 2005, the Hong Kong Curriculum Development Institute announced that a new Arts Education syllabus would be introduced in secondary schools from September 2009. Music will become a part of it. Thus the researcher must wait.

Finally in July 2009, the debating syllabus was finalized and published (appendix XI): except that some examination pieces are changed, the HKCEE music content remains unchanged again. Whereas, the HKALE music examination is cancelled (appendix XI). The supporting document for music as a part of the new 2009 Arts Education was printed in 2007 (appendix XIII.)

During these years, I learnt that patience and waiting are important doctrines for doing a “fine and complete” work. On the other hand, hopefully, this piece of study is a useful signpost for researchers who are interested in this marginal school subject.

The last but not the least, the researcher quotes the following beautiful paragraph to end this part of the acknowledgement: “... a university training is the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end; it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life.” (John Henry Newman, 1999: 160)

## **Chapter 1: Introduction to the Research – Outline of the Aims and Purposes of the Study**

### Introduction

Music education in Hong Kong is a kaleidoscope. It is a mixture of Eastern and Western cultures. On the one hand it is developed freely in the private lesson sector, on the other hand it is neglected in the school curriculum sector. Official figures show that since 1990, in Hong Kong, about fifty thousand musical instrumental students have participated in the Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) and Trinity College of London (TCL) examinations (Appendix I). Normally these candidates are taught privately.

### **1.1 A Comparison between the Number of HKCEE and HKALE Music Candidates and Art Candidates**

These figures do not, of course, imply that all the candidates will also take the local Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) or Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) (which are equivalent to GCSE and 'A' levels in England respectively). However, at least, the figures denote a relatively large potential number of candidates participating in music examinations. Nevertheless, the official figures of HKCEE or HKALE show that the numbers are very few (Appendix II). Since 1990, less than 240 HKCEE music candidates and not more than 20 HKALE music candidates have taken the examinations every year. If the number of candidate decreases to zero, will the examinations still exist?

This topic has not been investigated methodically. This research is an attempt to find

out the answers. No single research result is sufficient and able enough to improve or change a curriculum. The intention of this research is not to increase the number of HKCEE/HKALE music candidates in Hong Kong, but merely to pursue the following observations.

#### Four Research Problems for Research Direction

The facts mentioned above lead to the following four research intentions:

1. To determine if the HKCEE/HKALE music curricula will be reformed or cancelled because the number of candidates is continuously low (section 6.4, p. 201, interview with Mr. Yu).
2. To observe if policy initiatives attempt to preserve HKCEE/HKALE music curricula (section 4.2, new Arts Education).
3. To examine why the majority of secondary schools do not follow the HKCEE/HKALE music syllabi in music lessons (sections 6.2 and 6.3, reports of questionnaires – responses from secondary school principals and music teachers).
4. To investigate whether HKCEE/HKALE music syllabi would be covered by the Arts Education curriculum. In a similar situation since 1971 in Brazil, music lessons at secondary schools were substituted by Arts Education under the umbrella of integrated arts (i.e. music, drama, visual arts and dance. Hentschke, 1999: 14-29, being studied in section 4.2.1). As a part of the Arts Education curriculum, music is assessed to be a failure in Brazil because music is being even more neglected. If Hong Kong changes in this way, will music at secondary schools be more neglected and criticized as a failure as well? (Section 4.2.1)

### Five Questions for this Research

- 1) For the very small number of candidates taking HKCEE/HKALE music examinations in Hong Kong, is it reasonable that the examinations must be cancelled for the sake of saving resources and financial expenditure being put in the subject? (Section 6.4)
- 2) Does the situation imply that reform in secondary school music curriculum is necessary? Should some effort be made in order to ensure the subject's survival in Hong Kong senior secondary school curriculum? (Chapter 6)
- 3) Do these figures imply that there are problems about the syllabus content (e.g. too wide and too difficult)? (Chapter 6)
- 4) What will happen if the number of candidates participating in HKCEE/HKALE music in Hong Kong is reduced to zero one day? (The HKCEE German examination was cancelled in 1999 for this reason, section 6.4)
- 5) Where do qualified HKCEE/HKALE music teachers come from? (Section 6.4)

An official announcement published in *Sing Tao Daily Post* on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1998 (Appendix III) pointed out that it was high time to review secondary school music syllabi and examinations in Hong Kong. The researcher summarized and translated the news cutting into English (the original was in Chinese) as follows:

- 1) A responsible working group was established called the 'Working Group for the Music Curriculum Review'.
- 2) 95% of secondary schools evaluate the students' musical standard by singing only (which does not match the requirements of HKCEE/HKALE music examinations, Appendix IV).

- 3) 52% secondary music teachers teach another subject in schools, not concentrating on music teaching.
- 4) About 6% of secondary music teachers are not trained musically.
- 5) Chinese music and musical creativity are thought to be the most difficult topics for school music teachers.
- 6) More musical instruments and teaching materials are considered necessary.
- 7) In order to evaluate the students' overall musical performance, to ensure the continuity of the new music curriculum (intended to be introduced in 2001) and to uphold the relevant teaching strategies, a common course system called 'Standard Scheme for Evaluating Music Students' is being undertaken by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC).

## **1.2 Three Aims of the Study**

The above news story explored the weaknesses of the present secondary school music curriculum in Hong Kong. It also signifies that it was time to introduce reform in 2001. The aims of this study are to examine how far the HKCEE/HKALE music curricula in Hong Kong form a suitable basis for students (section 2.5.4); to examine the proposed 'new' music syllabus which was due to start in 2001 but was rejected (chapter 4, introduction); and to explore the possible variations and prospective in the field, e.g. Arts Education proposed for 2005 (section 4.2).

To show by figure:

## **Three Purposes Implicit in this Research**

**1998-2002 HKCEE / HKALE  
Music Curricula**

**2005 Arts Education**

**2001 “New” HKCEE /  
HKALE Music Curricula**

(Figure 1.1)

The purposes of this research are examining the HKCEE / HKALE music curricula during the period of 1998 to 2009. These will be divided into three sectors for study: 1998 to 2002, 2001 ‘new’ syllabi and 2005 Arts Education. Overlap areas in this figure implicit the effects of the relevant policy, development, syllabi, curriculum, changes and prospective of the research. These will be discussed in the following chapters.

### The Research Procedures

Lester (1999: 83) suggests that the aim of a research procedure should be twofold: the researchers must read and personally evaluate the sources for their own benefit as writers; and the researchers must present the sources to their readers in their own text as validated and authentic sources. As a result, the ultimate goal of a research paper is to test a researcher's ability to find and cite appropriate and relevant sources. On the other hand, Igwe (1993: 1) explained the researching process: "...writing a research paper involves making a detailed and an intensive study of a limited topic... which is done by collecting and investigating facts, figures and opinions on the topic from numerous and varied sources". To summarize briefly, the steps to be followed in planning the research study usually include:

### Six Steps for Planning this Research

1. Selecting a problem (section 1.1);
2. Writing a problem statement (section 1.1);
3. Reviewing the literature (chapters 2,3 and 4);
4. Developing appropriate theory (throughout the study);
5. Stating hypotheses (section 5.5) and through them, the precise objectives of the study (section 1.2);
6. Planning the procedures to be followed in conducting the study and selecting:
  - a. The research methodologies to be used (section 5.2);
  - b. The data needed and the means by which they are to be obtained (chapter 6);
  - c. The techniques to be used in analyzing the data obtained (chapter 7);
  - d. The study sample and the method for selecting it (section 5.7).

(Hayman, 1968: 21)

Following the above doctrines, the research procedures of this research include:

- 1) the locations of data sources (i.e. field sites). These are the libraries of Hull University, U.K., Hong Kong University, Hong Kong Chinese University, Hong Kong City University and Hong Kong Institute of Education; and the Music Office at Teachers' Center (the North Point Center, Hong Kong);
- 2) sending letters asking for relevant official papers and subscribing for journals;
- 3) visiting the Hong Kong Examination Authority and book stores (e.g. to purchase relevant syllabi and past year examination papers); and
- 4) sending questionnaires to target secondary schools.

The results of interviews with experts will be discussed in chapter 6.

### **1.3 Two Assumptions of the Study**

Research in curriculum is not a new topic. However, detail concerning secondary school music curriculum in Hong Kong is rarely found. For this reason, research findings for this research must be collected from a number of external sources, for example, issues involved in teaching methods (sections 6.2, 6.3 and 6.5), teacher in-service training (section 6.3) and changes of the music curriculum at secondary schools (section 3.1).

Generally speaking, studies of teaching methods are usually about pedagogy, knowledge, experience and aptitude. Teacher in-service training concerns support given by the school principals. Government and curriculum issues are usually



concerned with how far music education theories can be enforced into practice. As reform usually implies something new, to explore the unknown becomes one of the basic requirements for improving educational outputs and to make a reform step by step. However, as “educational reform is a long and complex process involving thousands of individuals at all levels of the system” (Dalin, 1994: ix), reform is not an individual’s job: it involves many people like policy makers, the executive, school principals, teachers, students and parents. In addition, reform concerns when, where and who (i.e. timing, places and people being involved). This may involve a very complex circumstance since social elements are changing from day to day (e.g. economic status and standard of value.). Educational issues are eternal issues. Relevant considerations should not be fixed at any point and reforms in education imply that the problems to be solved are practical, not illusory.

Furthermore, it is common sense that a balanced curriculum should be an ideal goal for all. In music education, limitations like personal motivation and preference may cause a major barrier. This is because some subjects are thought to be more important than others. In fact, it is an empirical phenomenon that music is treated as an extremely minor subject in schools in Hong Kong, although on the contrary, some philosophers and educators point out that music education has its value for making the soul of educated people graceful: “...musical training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which they might fasten, imparting grace, and making the soul of him who is rightly educated graceful, or of him who is ill-educated ungraceful.” (Plato, quoted by Rusk and Scotland, 1979:19)

Although there are a number of advantages for students being educated by music, there is a gap between theory and practice in that few secondary school students in Hong Kong follow the HKCEE/HKALE music curricula (section 1.1 and chapter 6). Because of this, the assumptions of this research are that:

- 1) The secondary school music curriculum in Hong Kong is not well-constructed (section 7.5); and
- 2) It may be a negative cycle: the lack of opportunities to study the HKCEE/HKALE music curriculum in senior forms (i.e. form 4 to form 7) in secondary school, lead to the lack of HKCEE/HKALE music candidates and teachers (section 7.5).

To show these steps by table:

## **Research Policy Recommendation**

Research Problem

(Chapter 1)

Literature Review

(Chapters 2, 3 ,4)

Government Documents

Review

(Section 2.3)

Concentrate on  
Secondary Schools Music Education  
in Hong Kong

(Chapter 3)

Methodology

(Chapter 5)

Questionnaires

(Sections 6.2, 6.3)

Interviews

(Section 6.4)

Analysis

(Chapter 7)

Conclusions, Recommendations, Comment

(Chapter 8)

(Figure 1.2)

Based on the researching direction being assumed above, the research questions or

hypothesis are then established: the decline of entries in HKCEE/HKALE music examinations is a cause for concern that the syllabi require a major modification. On the other hand, secondary schools music teachers in Hong Kong would have required a re-constructed program of in-service training to meet the new Arts Education system proposed for 2005. This however, was withdrawn.

#### **1.4 Limitations of the Study**

The role of music education in school curriculum is always under debate. Theoretically if it is valued in students' individual development, more time should be allocated to it in the timetable. Otherwise, it will be shown to be a waste of time. Should it be cancelled in the school curriculum? Results of related researches may contribute cons and pros in the field to a certain degree. However, the outcomes of educational researches can be neglected. For instance, Entwistle and Nisbet (1972: 314) complain that educational researchers' works are usually of "irrelevance or merely marginal relevance for educational researchers usually find is common sense or merely prove what people think they know". Maybe these points of view are too subjective. Nevertheless, this situation is actually illuminated in Hong Kong's music education. This will be further discussed in section 3.1. In the following section, eight limitations of this piece of research will be disclosed.

#### **Limitations of this Research**

- 1) Relevant studies and researches about Hong Kong secondary school music curriculum are rare (section 3.3).

- 2) Some materials and information must be collected from correlated areas, such as those influenced by education policy and Arts Education (sections 1.5, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3).
- 3) Usually a hypothesis should be in the form of an answer to the proposed question. However, there are always variables and no definite answer to issues related to music education (e.g. personal attitude and aptitude, section 5.5).
- 4) A hypothesis should be testable through empirical investigation. However, an educational issue is always flexible and debatable (section 5.9).
- 5) A hypothesis must be stated clearly. However, simple words cannot always explain clearly matters related to music education in Hong Kong.
- 6) A hypothesis must be consistent with what is already known. However, this principle may be different in different times for curriculum subjects (e.g. changes of education policy, sections 5.9 and 6.4).

In the following section, the research procedures will be examined.

### **1.5 Model to be Followed**

Based on the initial information above, it can be seen that in Hong Kong music is always treated as an optional and marginal subject at schools. Candidates have the choice to take the examination or not. For some major subjects like Chinese, English or Mathematics, candidates' choices are minimized that they may even have no chance to drop the examination. In other words, the large number of candidates taking these major subjects should not assume that it is a problem-free curriculum. In fact, the very few secondary music candidates may indicate more implications than we can imagine.

It is hoped that the findings in this thesis will not only be helpful to those interested in the research area, but also hopefully, initiate an attempt to explore for how far would be the influences on a subject's development under a changing education policy and curriculum (sections 5.9 and 6.4). This is the purpose behind this thesis.

In Chapter 2, local education policy and secondary school curriculum will be studied. In addition, a number of factors that influence Hong Kong's education and music education will be examined. Chapter 3 is a significant section about music education and music curriculum in secondary schools in Hong Kong. Chapters 4 to 8 form the main body of this thesis. The aims are, firstly, to find out the problems and issues raised by this research and to examine the role of secondary school music teachers; secondly, to test the hypotheses and explain the relevant methodologies of this research; thirdly, to scrutinize the data found from this research. And finally, suggestions, conclusions and limitations of this research will follow. This thesis, to be expected, is one of the many starting points for further research. On the other hand, sincere respect is expressed here to all the authors and editors whose authorized quotations have been adopted in this thesis.

## **1.6 Summary of this Chapter**

The crisis in HKCEE/HKALE music examinations brings out five issues for this research (section 1.1). The aims of this research are: to examine the music curricula; the 'new' proposed music curricula starting in 2001; and to explore changes in the field (i.e. Arts Education proposed in 2005, sections 1.3 and 4.2). Based on the initial findings, the two assumptions of this research are mentioned in section 1.3

In order to study further in the field and find out the solutions, in chapter two, the effects of national education development, policy and curriculum on the secondary school music curriculum in Hong Kong will be studied.

## **Chapter 2: A Review of the Influence of Hong Kong Education Development, Policy and Curriculum on Secondary School Music Curriculum**

### **Introduction**

The initial problem and format of this research have been introduced in chapter 1. For the purpose of understanding the background elements, in this chapter, educational development that influences the policy and curriculum of music education in secondary schools in Hong Kong will be scrutinized.

### **2.1 Education in Hong Kong**

Generally speaking, education policy-making encompasses curriculum planning and management, then teaching and learning. The structure is complex with many people with different ideas and values. Usually, curriculum acts as a tool for putting theories into practice. For example, the distribution of time for different subjects at schools; giving instruction to teachers about what sort of knowledge should be taught in the classrooms; the design of the syllabus contents; and the relevant information and teaching materials provided for schools. The following sections will review some backgrounds and characteristics of Hong Kong education and the influences on the secondary school music curriculum.

#### **2.1.1 Traditional Chinese Education**

##### **Some Background**

Hong Kong is a small trading port of China. China is one of the four most ancient countries in the world and its culture has a history going back over 5000 years.



Generally speaking, in ancient times education was mainly transferred by oral means. In China, the term 'education' was first officially used by Man-ji (372 B.C. to 289 BC, a student of Confucius: *Chinese Encyclopedia*, 1988:1). An ancient Chinese dictionary *Implications of Words* states that education has two meanings: teaching and learning; and nurturing children for virtue (*Chinese Encyclopedia*, 1988: 1).

Usually in an undeveloped country, education happens through the family learning. With increasing economic development education becomes more than an item of luxury consumption for the rich. Ancient China was no exception. Confucius preached the idea of popular education 2500 years ago (551 B.C. to 479 B.C.). His well-known doctrine is "Education for all". This slogan forms the fundamental Chinese attitude to respect the value of education. Simpson's observation: "The Chinese are extremely proud of their cultural heritage and have a traditional love of scholarship which enables them to over-ride much personal hardship in the pursuit of knowledge." (Simpson, 1960:6)

#### Educational System: in Ancient China

The educational system has been well developed in China over 2000 years. Since the T'ang dynasty (618-907), an educated elite selected by a system of civil service examinations had administered the educational system and this continued through to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Education had become a major concern of the Chinese people because success in these examinations was the regular channel to official positions which brought not only prestige and power but also wealth: "In traditional China, there was a close relationship between the educational system and

the award of official appointment. The ultimate goal of studying was to let the most outstanding literati join the government as bureaucrats” (*Education in Hong Kong: Past and Present*, 1993: 8) In other words, education in ancient China was related to social mobility.

In A.D. 606 during the Sui Dynasty, the Civil Service Examination System (i.e. the ‘Four-gu’ system) was established. Its design was for the public, including the poor, to get the chance of official posts in the government. As a result, the system extended the opportunity of education to the public. However, the aim of this examination system is criticized for making “the intelligentsia spend all their efforts and time preparing for the examination” and the examination is said to be “a waste of intellectual resources” (*Education in Hong Kong: Past and Present*, 1993: 8). The main reason is that the contents of the examination were concentrated on literature and politics only. No scientific subject was concerned. Finally, the Civil Service Examination System was abolished in 1905 which marked the end of the ancient Chinese open examination.

### Music as a Learning Subject

Although the 1300 years old examination came to an end, Confucian orthodoxy is deeply rooted in Chinese culture and still contributes to the practices of Chinese culture and education which influences Hong Kong as well. Confucius espoused literature, mathematics, etiquette, equestrian skill, shooting and music as the six major subjects in the curriculum - music had its foothold in the Chinese education system since the Middle Ages.

### **2.1.2 The Influences of Chinese Education Doctrine in Hong Kong Education**

#### **Brief History of Hong Kong**

Hong Kong is in the southeastern part of China. It comprises Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories. The population of nearly seven million lives in 1.243 square kilometers - it is a very densely populated city. Hong Kong Island was ceded to Britain under the 1842 Treaty of Nanking. Under the 1860 Peking (Beijing) Convention, the Kowloon Peninsula was acquired and the New Territories secured on a 99-year lease from 1898.

The population increased between the 1950s and the 1970s from one million to five million as refugees fled from China because of civil wars and the Second World War. Subsequently, the Hong Kong government enforced strict border controls in the 1980s. Negotiations about Hong Kong's future were started during the early 1980s between the British and Chinese governments. A unique agreement was signed in Beijing in 1984 in which Britain transferred full sovereignty of the Islands and New Territories to China on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1997. Under the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the "One Country Two Systems" agreement, Hong Kong's social and economic freedom and capitalist life style would be preserved for 50 years. Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region with its own laws, currency, budget and tax system.

Concerning the local culture: Hong Kong experienced a change from a traditional Chinese society into a mixture of Western culture since 1842. When compared with over 5000 years of Chinese culture, the 155 years of British sovereignty is a comparatively short period. Chinese thinking, belief, and value standards are still strongly influential on the Hong Kong public.

### 2.1.3 Development of Education in Hong Kong: East meets West

The early development of education in Hong Kong can be grasped from the following paragraph:

Hong Kong was not a piece of barren land before it was ceded (in 1842) to the British. Many clans and lineages who lived in the area south of Shenzhen River and north of Kowloon had set up study-libraries for their members to prepare for the Civil Service Examination. Some private schools (*sishu*) were set up on the Island of Hong Kong aiming at providing basic knowledge for the villagers.

*(Education in Hong Kong: Past and Present, 1993: 9)*

At that time, in 1842, Hong Kong was a fishing port and the government had not been developed to ideal levels yet. Meanwhile, for religious purposes, Christian churches and Western missionaries went to Hong Kong to establish educational institutions. For example, the Morrison Memorial School was moved from Macau to Hong Kong in 1842 and the Anglo-Chinese School came from Malacca in the next year (*Education in Hong Kong: Past and Present, 1993: 9*). At that time, a policy of non-intervention policy in education was adopted by the colonial government. There were two main kinds of schools in Hong Kong: on one hand, the missionary and voluntary schools established by Western churches, and on the other hand the traditional Chinese schools granted to the villages by the government.

A large influx of Chinese in the 1850s (the turbulence in South China, mainly from the Pearl River Delta) brought not only big families, but also raised the issue of school education for the large number of children. Furthermore, the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Chinese war in the late 1850s made Hong Kong experience social disturbance

and economic crisis. The Hong Kong government realized that the laissez-faire policy did not work any more. A series of reforms were initiated during the governorship of Sir Hercules Robinson (1859-1865). The Board of Education was established in 1860. It remarks that:

...local education (at that time) underwent a striking progress by the setting up of the Board of Education in 1860, which established the Central School by merging all government schools in the City of Victoria (i.e. Hong Kong Island) and appointed a European master as the Headmaster. The founding of the Central School in 1862 marked an innovative step in the process of local education.

*(Education in Hong Kong: Past and Present, 1993: 9)*

These developments marked the growth of early education in Hong Kong. The Central School became dominant in Hong Kong's education. Before the First World War, eight out of seventeen Chinese Legislative and Executive Councils members were graduates of the Central School. In addition, twenty-one out of thirty "influential characters" at that time (selected by a local magazine) came from the Central School. To quote the sentences used in the book *Education in Hong Kong* (1993: 9): "these figures were fully qualified to look at Chinese affairs with English eyes, and at English affairs with Chinese eyes."

#### Government Support in Education Development

In the 1902 *Committee Report on Education* a suggestion had been made that the Hong Kong government should put some effort into the development of the intellects of the upper class by establishing a Chinese elite group. The purpose was to "pave the

way for spreading the new concept among the masses” (*Education in Hong Kong: Past and Present*, 1993:9). As a result, the government chose to concentrate good education on a small, important and wealthy group. This policy retained its function from the late nineteenth century to the appearance of the 1935 Burney Report. The second turning point of Hong Kong’s public education was the foundation of the Hong Kong University in 1912. Governor Lugard said at the opening ceremony of the University:

...it was intended to enable the richer among the Chinese to study in the environment of their own country, close to the ancestral shrines of their fore-fathers, and in touch with their own people instead of becoming denaturalized by long residence abroad, a benefit wealth cannot buy: that it is to enable those who have not the means to go abroad for a degree to obtain a first class education at little cost, while its scholarships will enable the very poor who have ability to acquire an equal degree.

(*Education in Hong Kong: Past and Present*, 1993:10)

### Free and Compulsory Education in Hong Kong

The sudden expansion of population caused an enormous impact again on the embryonic nature of local education. Difficult years elapsed from the mid 1940s to the 1960s and it was not until 1971 that six years free and compulsory education for the general population was introduced. The White Paper *Secondary Education in Hong Kong During the Next Decade* was published in 1974 and more schools were built. In 1978, the free and compulsory education policy was extended to junior secondary education (i.e. form three). The target of providing more school places in senior forms was issued in the other 1978 White Paper *The Development of Senior Secondary and Tertiary Education* (*Education in Hong Kong: Past and Present*, 1993: 11). After that, four important institutes were founded in the 1980s: the Hong Kong Academy for

Performing Arts, the City Polytechnic of Hong Kong (now the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong), the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and the Open Learning Institute of Hong Kong. Since then, arts, music, drama, technology, science and computer knowledge have laid the foundations for development in the post-secondary level in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong government put considerable effort, materials and financial support into education after the Second World War. The nine-year free and compulsory education can assuredly assist the development of music education in schools as well. Before examining the music education policy in secondary schools in Hong Kong (section 2.3), in the following sections, six important education policy-making bodies in Hong Kong are going to be introduced.

## **2.2 Six Important Education Policy Making Bodies in Hong Kong**

The six main bodies responsible for education policy in Hong Kong are the Education Commission; the Board of Education; the University and Polytechnic Grants Committee; the Vocational Training Council; the Education and Manpower Branch; and the Education Department.

### **1. The Education Commission**

The Education Commission (EC), which suggests the overall educational aims and recommends priorities for implementation, was established in 1984. Most important is its power to formulate education policy. In other words, the EC coordinates the

educational planning and monitors the local development in education research. It is responsible for all key stages. The missions of the EC are:

- i) to define overall educational objectives, formulate education policy and recommend priorities for implementation having regard to resources available;
- ii) to co-ordinate and monitor the planning and development of education at all levels; and
- iii) to initiate educational research.

*(Education Commission Report, no. 1, 1984: 1)*

Up to 1998, the EC submitted seven educational reports to the government. These will be discussed in more detail in sections 2.3.1 to 2.3.5.

## 2. The University Grants Committee

The University and Polytechnic Grants Committee (UGC) was set up in 1972. It was formerly known as University Grants Committee (established in 1965). It is responsible for giving recommendations to the Hong Kong government on the development of higher education by, for instance, checking the funding requirements of tertiary education programmes and administering government grants for the institutions. Up to today, the UGC has been the *de facto* policy maker of local higher education.

## 3. Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation

The Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA) is an independent statutory body established in 1990 by the Government to give advice on the academic



standards of degree programs in higher education institutions in Hong Kong and on educational standards and qualifications in general. In general, the Council has been providing professional advice to the Government and other organizations pertaining to academic accreditation, education systems, and the comparative standard of qualifications. The Council has also been providing consultancy services to individuals and employers about the standard of non-local qualifications having regard to their comparability with local benchmarks.

#### 4. The Education and Manpower Bureau

The Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) was set up in 1980. It is an independent branch of the Government Secretariat. Its importance lies in its responsibilities for overall formulation of education policy and monitoring educational programs. The Secretary of the EMB is the chief spokesperson for government policies on education. Its jobs include developing strategies in education; formulating; reviewing and evaluating policies; managing relations with the legislature; planning activities; and setting targets for the Branch's performance.

#### 5. The Vocational Training Council

The Vocational Training Council (VTC) was founded in 1982. It holds the authority of both advisory and executive functions for aspects of technical education and industrial training in Hong Kong. In addition, the VTC administers technical institutes and training centers by training operation. Actually, the VTC is a policy-making body for all kinds of training manpower preparation programs locally.

## 6. The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority

This was established in 1977 as an independent, self-financing statutory body, formerly known as the Hong Kong Examinations Authority. The Authority is assisted by a number of committees in its administration of the examinations in Hong Kong which include the Authority's Council, Finance and General Purposes Committee, Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers Main Committee, Basic Competency Assessments Main Committee, School Examinations Board, Research Committee and Communication Committee. The main role of the Secretariat is to conduct the HKCEE and HKALE examinations. In addition, it also administers over 200 examinations leading to academic, professional or practical qualifications (including ABRSM).

In the following section, essential information about music education policy in secondary schools will be clarified.

### **2.3 Music Education Policy in Secondary Schools in Hong Kong**

#### Some Background

General education up to the level of secondary education became the target of Hong Kong education policy in the 1960s: "...This Paper (*Education Policy*, 1965) accordingly summarizes present educational policy, reviews the position which has now been reached, and proposes new intermediate educational aims up to the level of full secondary education..." (*Education Policy*, 1965: 1) In order to make sure that the policy could be enforced, the government took the following policy:

- i) to ensure that places are available in government, aided or private primary schools for all children of primary school age;
- ii) to provide in government and aided primary schools, and to encourage the provision in private primary schools, of an additional one year and, later on, an additional two years, of secondary education in Special Forms I and II for those pupils who are unable to gain admission to full secondary courses and who wish to remain at school until they reach the statutory minimum age for industrial employment - that is to say, at age 14; and
- iii) to provide in government, aided and selected private schools secondary education to School Certificate level for about 15% of all pupils who complete the primary school courses; and to encourage voluntary and private agencies to supplement this provision. Free sites, capital grants and interest-free loans for school building, as well as limited help towards meeting recurrent expenditure, are made available for non-profit-making organizations. Sites restricted to school use are made available for purchase by profit-making organizations.

*(Education Policy, 1965: 1)*

In 1965 only 18.3% of primary school graduates were admitted to further secondary education in government - aided secondary schools, and given assisted places in private secondary schools. Another 49.3% of primary graduates were admitted to other kinds of secondary schools, such as those run by private or voluntary bodies (*Education Policy, 1965: 2*). At that time, Hong Kong education was very reliant on voluntary or private educational organizations which provided about half the places for secondary education. In order to maintain a reasonable standard, the Education Department assisted these institutes by providing advisory services and facilities for in-service training courses (*Education Policy, 1965: 2*). The 1970s was the golden period of local education development because six-years (from 1971) and nine-years (from 1978) free and compulsory education schemes were established. In 1984 the Education Commission published the first local *Education Commission Report*. This is the background to the development of music as a school subject at schools in Hong Kong. The contents that affect the music education policy in secondary schools are going to be examined as follows.

### **2.3.1 Education Commission Report, no. 1, October 1984**

Report no. 1 (1984) is about Hong Kong's education policy. The purposes of the paper are:

- a) to define overall educational objectives, formulate education policy, and recommend priorities for implementation having regard to resources available;
- b) to co-ordinate and monitor the planning and development of education at all levels; and
- c) to initiate educational research.

*(Education Commission Report, No. 1, 1984:1)*

The hidden mission of these suggestions was backed up by the belief that "...human resources have been, and will remain, a principal asset of Hong Kong, and that education is the key to their development" (*Education Commission Report, No. 1, 1984: 4*). It is believed that the major asset of Hong Kong, which lacks natural resources, is human resources. The Hong Kong government encourages education investment and the expansion of educational opportunities to the public has become the key factor in achieving the target.

#### **Junior Secondary Education Assessment**

Because of limited places, junior secondary students had to be assessed by a system called the "Junior Secondary Education Assessment" (JSEA) System. The purpose of the JSEA System is to choose the students with relatively higher academic achievement to continue education at senior secondary level. Nevertheless, opponents of this scheme called for its abolition and for resources to concentrate on the purpose of true popular education: "Most members of the public, interest groups, school councils and associations, and District Boards\* were in favour of the abolition of the

JSEA System through an expansion in the provision of subsidized F.4 and 5 places”  
(*Education Commission Report No. 1, 1984: 9*).

[‘District Boards’ are the boards which members are elected by the citizens in the constituencies through the District Board Elections.]

### Hong Kong Teaching Service Scheme

In 2004, there were insufficient secondary (forms 4 and 5) places to cope with all the junior (form 3) students. It can be claimed that the system is a selective qualitative scheme for only the students with comparatively higher academic scores can continue to senior secondary education. In this case, the quality of the teacher workforce becomes important: “The quality of education in Hong Kong hinges upon the availability of a teaching force which is adequate in numbers and quality” (*Education Commission Report No. 1, 1984: 51*). Undoubtedly, quality teacher forces are a basic support for quality education. Nevertheless, there was no consensus at the establishment of a recommended scheme for up-grading teachers’ professional skills which was called the “Hong Kong Teaching Service Scheme” (HKTSS):

- i) the statutory provisions relating to teachers, specifically the stipulation that no person shall teach in a school unless he is a registered (i.e. qualified) or permitted (i.e. unqualified but allowed to teach specific subjects in a particular school) teacher; and
- ii) Government regulations and codes of aid relating to the qualifications and conditions of service for teachers in the government and aided sectors.

(*Education Commission Report No. 1, 1984: 62-63*)

The HKTSS ensures the system of teacher registration ensuring the credentials and qualifications of the teachers. Nevertheless, because of the shortage of well-qualified

teachers, this scheme lacked majority support from the teachers. Furthermore, arguments were also raised about salaries since they would be affected if teachers were not registered as 'qualified'. The scheme became unenforceable.

### General Teaching Council

In November 1998, the Education Commission suggested another scheme. A paper called the *Establishment of a General Teaching Council (GTC): Consultation Document* was published. Theoretically, the GTC (also called the Hong Kong Teaching Service) was drawn up by the Preparatory Committee on the Establishment of General Teaching Council (Preparatory Committee), which was set up under the Education Commission. It provides that the function of the GTC is: firstly, to enhance the local teachers' professional standards; secondly, to maintain the integrity of the profession; and thirdly, to raise the professional esteem of teachers (*Establishment of a General Teaching Council: Consultation Document*, 1998: 1). Although the recommendation of the setting up of the GTC was not welcomed, its aims are of considerable value. The proposed aims of GTC are to ensure:

- a) a key role in the policy formulation about teacher registration, such as criteria for registration and issues relating to teacher qualifications;
- b) power of internal discipline and power to consider complaints, settle disputes, make investigations and conduct disciplinary hearings where necessary;
- c) substantial influence in ensuring the quality and professional relevance of teacher education programs; and
- d) a duty to encourage teachers to undertake continuing professional education and to promote their professional development.

(*Education Commission Report*, No. 1, 1998: 1-2)

Lack of support for the GTC scheme may result in a lack of direction for the teachers.

Efforts are then considered as important for establishing a guidepost for teachers, at least in terms of various forms of educational research. Four bodies are responsible for this purpose: the educational Research Establishment of the Education Department; the Department of Education of the Faculty of Education (formally known as the School of Education) of the University of Hong Kong; the School of Education of the Chinese University of Hong Kong; and the Hong Kong Polytechnic (*Education Commission Report*, No. 1, 1984: 78-79). The Educational Research Establishment directs general education research and controls the standards at all levels of school education in Hong Kong. The Universities and the Polytechnic undertake research studies on education which include, for example, inquiries into language studies and teaching, curricular design and learning process, and educational thoughts and systems.

Because of lack of support for the establishment of a registered scheme for the teachers, a flexible system of education research then becomes important to keep and enhance local education quality: "...we believe education (in Hong Kong) must be planned as a flexible system in conjunction with changing circumstances and requirements. Education policy must be subject to a continuous process of review and be receptive to new ideas." (*Education Commission Report*, No. 1, 1984: 104)

#### Major Problem: Qualification of Teachers

It can be seen that support from school principals and a clear direction of teaching for teachers are important considerations for the system's success. Section 4.3 – the Changing Role of Secondary School Music Teachers in Hong Kong – specifically

Examines on the required knowledge for the HKCEE/HKALE music teachers. The following section is a brief statement to disclose the core issue raised from Education Commission Report number 1.

The Education Commission Report number 1 disclosed the difficulties between ideal education and the practical limitations. Although the Report did not give any substantial answer to the issues, at least, it points out that one of the major problems comes from the qualification of teachers. This issue occurs not only in general secondary education but also for specific subjects that require expertise knowledge and skill, such as music. To ensure the qualification of teachers, strengthening curriculum planning and curriculum development should take into force at the same time.

### **2.3.2 Education Commission Report, no. 2, August 1986**

Report no. 2 points out a number of issues being neglected in Hong Kong education, in the Report no.1. These include:

- 1) strengthening curriculum planning and development;
- 2) kindergarten education;
- 3) the role of the Hong Kong Examinations Authority;
- 4) sixth form education;
- 5) development of tertiary education;
- 6) special education.
- 7) teacher preparation;
- 8) development of the teaching profession;
- 9) priorities and organization of open education; and
- 10) review of the present modes of financing of education.

*(Education Commission Report, No. 2, 1986: 6-7)*



By reviewing all the above ten points mentioned in the Report, only point 1 - strengthening curriculum planning and development - is relevant to the current thesis. The report mentions that the curriculum for secondary education should: "...continue to be revised and the examination system should be reviewed and revised as appropriate in parallel with the provision of more subsidized post-form 3 places to achieve the phasing out of the JSEA..." (*Education Commission Report, No.2, 1986: 1, para. 2.36*)

### Quantity Education Rather than Quality Education

This statement demonstrates that, in the late 1980s, the Hong Kong government emphasized quantity education rather than quality education. In order to achieve the goal, the Education Department and the Hong Kong Examinations Authority cooperated on a number of proposals for broadening the senior secondary curriculum (*Education Commission Report, No. 2, 1986:15*). Suggestions for initiating the relevant innovation on school curriculum were that:

- i) Teachers should continue to play an active role in curriculum development and more attention should be given to secondary school curriculum;
- ii) Curriculum development should be progressively decentralized;
- iii) Schools should be encouraged to develop more teacher participation in decision-making, initially in respect of professional matters and gradually extending to general administration.

(*Education Commission Report, No. 2, 1986: 22*)

Teachers, curriculum development and schools are brought together in Report number 2. Nevertheless, the three ideal targets mentioned above are not easy to achieve because, for example, the workload for secondary school teachers in Hong Kong has long been

criticized for over- load (there are usually forty or more students in a class and about thirty lessons per week for each teacher, including music teachers who usually teach other subjects as well). It is suggested that not until the ratio of the teacher and students can be reduced to an ideal rate (e.g. 1:20), in addition to the provision of extra supplementary support (e.g. training courses and training materials), it is very difficult to persuade secondary teachers to play an active role. This phenomenon can be grasped also in the situation of secondary school music teachers' situation (section 6.3, the Report of the Questionnaires: Secondary School Music Teachers).

### **2.3.3 Education Commission Report, no. 3, June 1988 and no.4, November 1990**

Report no. 3 suggested that the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) should be restructured. The functions of the CDC are to co-ordinate all levels of education, i.e. kindergarten, primary, secondary level, and also deal with textbook matters (*Education Commission Report*, No. 3, 1988: 79 – 80). Report no. 4 was concerned with the context of nine-year free and compulsory education, curriculum, and behavioural problems in schools (*Education Commission Report*, No. 4, 1990: 1). These two reports are co-related and going to be studied together in the following section.

### **Rapid Development of Education: Benefits Music Education Development on School Base**

The beginning of Report No. 3 said that the development of education in the 1970s to the 1980s saw a substantial and rapid increase in opportunities for subsidized basic

education because of the success of free and compulsory education. Report no. 4 also mentioned the curriculum for junior secondary education. This includes the four main types of school subjects - compulsory, optional, supplementary and minor choice:

- i) Compulsory subjects: Chinese; English; Mathematics; Science.
- ii) Optional subjects: Social studies / Geography / History/ Economics and Public Affairs / Chinese History.
- iii) Supplementary subjects: Physical Education; Art and Design; Home Economics / Design and Technology.
- iv) Minor choice: Ethical/ Religious Education and Music.

Although music is ranked as a minor choice subject, at least music has a positive opportunity to continue to develop in a 9 year free and compulsory education system in Hong Kong. In other words, music education has had a chance to expand in secondary school since the introduction of the nine-year compulsory education in 1978.

#### Students' Aptitudes and Abilities: Government's Viewpoints and Functions

Although the junior secondary school curriculum has achieved a reasonable way to develop under the government policy, the issue still exists that: "The common core curriculum does not adequately meet the needs of some students, particularly those at either end of the ability range... We consider that students with different aptitudes should be educated in different ways, and would therefore like to see alternative curricula being made available for these students." (*Education Commission Report*, No. 4, 1990:13)

Music is a subject that specifically depends upon students' ability and aptitude. The above paragraph said that the availability of an alternative curriculum for students with various abilities and aptitudes is desirable (section 6.6 and 6.7 reflect HKCEE/HKALE music students' support related to this area). In addition, it suggests that the possible answer probably "lies in pursuing further the integration of subjects at both primary level and junior secondary level where this is feasible" (*Education Commission Report*, No. 4, 1990:13). Two viewpoints are presented:

- 1) There is no clear delineation of responsibility for curriculum policy matters between the central Government. Consequently, the responsibility for addressing curriculum problems is not discharged by any single body. It is suggested that the Secretary for Education and Manpower (SEM) is responsible for putting major policy issues to the Commission and Executive Council. The aims are that: a) laying down and keeping under review the basic aims for education at different levels; b) formulating policies and programs, and recommending priorities; c) seeing how the education/vocational training systems function, and coordinating them where necessary; d) securing resources; and e) ensuring that value for money is achieved (*Education Commission Report*, No. 4, 1990:14).
- 2) The CDC does not have a status commensurate with its important role in education and is, moreover, not as representative as it should be in spite of this. The Education Commission suggests that the CDC should be upgraded and its membership should be reviewed (*Education Commission Report*, No. 4, 1990: 15). To maintain a balance between curriculum development and the public examination system is necessary. To strengthen the relationship between the CDC and the HKEA further is a considerable task. In addition, there is no clear

defined core of professional working area(s) dedicated to curriculum development work on a full time basis. The report points out that there is a long-term conflict between the work of assessing the performance of teachers and designing curriculum and advising teachers on its implementation. It suggests that these functions should be separated and the function of developing curriculum should be vested in a separate body operating full time (*Education Commission Report No. 4, 1990: 16*).

It is understood that curriculum development is a process requiring a great deal of effort and it will be affected by constraints imposed by Government procedures as well (*Education Commission Report, No. 4, 1990: 16*). This has also happened in the secondary school music curriculum (section 5.9, Information announced in September 2000: an Additional Factor affecting the Research Direction). Report number 4 reports that the Education Commission considered that an institute called the Curriculum Development Institute (CDI) should be formed as a new division of the Education Department. It suggested that the CDI will be granted a high degree of autonomy and accorded sufficient flexibility to carry out its work and links with schools (*Education Commission Report No. 4, 1990: 16*). In order to achieve this goal, the Education Commission recommended that people responsible must be employed through open recruitment on contract terms, professionals from amongst the body of civil servants and experienced people from outside the civil service (*Education Commission Report, No. 4, 1990: 17*). Ideally speaking, the CDI “would be able to benefit from a regular infusion of new blood and new ideas to sustain the creativity and innovativeness required for good curriculum development” (*Education Commission Report No. 4, 1990: 17*). It is recommended that the CDI should have six more functions:

- i) serving the CDC as its secretariat;
- ii) being responsible to curriculum planning (including research, experimentation, innovation and evaluation);
- iii) providing and updating curriculum guides and subject syllabi;
- iv) developing resource materials and managing resource centers;
- v) liaising with the Hong Kong Examination Authority, the Education Department Advisory Inspectorate and teacher training institutions on the development and evaluation of the curriculum; and
- vi) reviewing textbooks and providing library resource services.

*(Education Commission Report No. 4, 1990:17-18)*

### The Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA)

Despite these suggestions, the Report also suggested that the ranking policy which divides secondary schools into five bands (band 1 to band 5) based on the results of the students' open examination results: "...may have a negative motivational effect upon those lower down or in the "fail" grades. Slower learners find themselves in the lower grades consistently from year to year, irrespective of the progress they may have made. This may lead to self-image and disciplinary problems" (*Education Commission Report, No. 4, 1990: 67*). This ranking scheme brings out another system – the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA).

The SSPA is the system by which primary students are allocated to secondary schools and which indicates which band of the school the students will be sent to. By reason of the chain effect, parents are coming to be more aware of the good names of the primary schools for getting comparatively higher scores in the SSPA -- as a connection to a higher band secondary school. As a result, students in Hong Kong now live in the context of surroundings characterized by a highly competitive

academic race. Not surprisingly, minor subjects like music become more and more neglected in the school curriculum.

To conclude, Reports number 3 and 4 reflect the problems of the secondary school curriculum and that examination orientation is characteristic of Hong Kong education policy. It can be seen that the teaching profession comes to have the key role in the development of the curriculum. This is going to be examined next.

#### **2.3.4 Education Commission Report, no. 5: The Teaching Profession, June 1992**

The title of Report No. 5 is “The Teaching Profession”. The purposes include: defining educational objectives; making education policy, implementing of resources; monitoring the planning and development of education at all levels; and enforcing the relevant educational research (*Education Commission Report*, No. 5, 1992: Preface).

#### To Improve the Standard of the Teaching Profession: the Establishment of the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIE) in 1998

To improve the standard of the teaching profession was one of the most important goals of the Hong Kong government in the early 1990s. In Report no. 5, three chapters are important for the investigations in this research: chapter 5 “Improving the Teacher Education Program”; chapter 7 “Advice on Teacher Education and Qualifications”; and chapter 8 “Teacher Professionalism”. The proposed teacher education programme is described as “...the means for imparting, in a systematic manner, knowledge and skills likely to be useful to teachers in delivering their services to students...”(*Education Commission Report*, No. 5, 1992: 61). In addition,

it states that: "...a well-designed program equips teachers to perform effectively early in their careers, helps to reduce wastage, and provides opportunities for professional development." (*Education Commission Report*, No. 5, 1992: 61)

To achieve this goal, the foundation stone was the establishment of the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIE) in 1998 for concentrating on teacher training. The mission of the HKIE is said to: "...become a center of excellence in teacher education and continuous professional development in Hong Kong, as well as to provide leadership and professional advice and support to the professional community..." (Prospectuses, 1998 -1999, *Mission Statement*)

### Music Courses Provided by the Hong Kong Institute of Education

For music education, two music certificates are provided by the HKIE: Primary Education Course and Secondary Education Course. The objectives of the courses are helping the teacher trainees to:

- 1) be articulate about the general nature of music, the ways in which it may be related to education and how it functions in the daily life of students;
- 2) possess a comprehensive understanding of musical elements and forms, and to relate them to a historical, stylistic, and geographic framework;
- 3) improvise and arrange Music under different teaching situations;
- 4) demonstrate creative and flexible skills in their teaching; and
- 5) identify relevant teaching materials and strategies and utilize them in valid teaching environment.

(*HKIE 1998-1999 Prospectus*, 1998: 53)

The Prospectus says that the music courses emphasize:

- 1) the general nature of music and education to the students' daily life;



- 2) training of musical elements, musical forms, stylistic and the relation to the community have been provided;
- 3) practical circumstances are provided for practicing music teaching situations at schools;
- 4) creative and flexible skills in music teaching are supervised; and
- 5) teaching materials, strategies and how to use these teaching tools in valid teaching environment are concerned.

*(Education Commission Report, No. 5, 1988: 53)*

It is found that the courses encourage music teacher trainees help their students in the future to approach daily life music, and to develop their creativity abilities (points 1, 2 and 4). These elements are obviously in contrast to the HKCEE/HKALE music syllabi (section 3.1.2). Undoubtedly, the reports of the HKCEE/HKALE student questionnaires reflect these dilemmas (sections 6.6 and 6.7)

### **2.3.5 Education Commission Report, no. 6, March 1996 and no. 7, September 1997**

Report No. 6 is about “Enhancing Language Proficiency: A Comprehensive Strategy”. The main theme of this document is not the language being used for music lessons in secondary schools, thus Report No. 6 is irrelevant. Report no. 7 is going to be studied next.

#### Aims at Quality Education

The areas covered in Report No. 7 are curriculum planning and design, public awareness, efforts made by schools, parents and students. In order to achieve the goal

of quality education, both internal quality assurance within schools and the establishment of an external quality assurance mechanism are important (*Education Commission Report, No. 7, 1997: 5*). On the other hand, innovative teaching methods should be introduced so that to “develop the potential of students in music, art and sports etc.” (*Education Commission Report, No. 7, 1996: 25*) Report No. 7 also mentioned that curriculum planning should be designed in a balanced and flexible way for the sake of better development of the pupil, and should include the provision of moral education and opportunities for cultural development (*Education Commission Report, No. 7, 1996: 61*).

Generally speaking, the ultimate goal of quality education is to educate students to become all-round citizens. All-round development usually covers ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics. As music is believed to be an ideal subject for fostering good sense and aesthetic appreciation in a pupil (section 2.5), the subject should then be considered as a part of quality education.

#### **2.4 Summary of Education Commission Reports Numbers. 1 to 5 and 7**

As far as the Education Commission Reports No. 1 to 5 and 7 are concerned, the development of Hong Kong education policy can be summarized into three main stages:

- i) After the Second World War, the period of the 1960s to 1970s was the golden period for education development in Hong Kong.
- ii) Since 1984, the Hong Kong government has shown its strong determination to

make improvements in education (i.e. it has published seven *Education Commission Reports* from 1984 to 1997).

The following table summarizes the objectives of the seven Education Commission Reports:

<b>Report</b>	<b>Main Theme</b>
No.1 (1984)	Landmark definition of local educational objectives
No.2 (1986)	A supplement to Report No. 1 which covers practical suggestions on strengthening curricular planning and development
No.3 (1988)	Suggests that the CDC should be restructured to serve the curriculum development
No.4 (1990)	A review of the free and compulsory education system and curriculum in Hong Kong (six years since 1972 and nine years since 1978)
No.5 (1992)	Suggestions on teacher teaching profession
No.6 (1996)	Inappropriate to this research
No.7 (1997)	Quality education in schools in the new millennium

(Table 2.1)

These reports can be divided into three main categories:

- i) Reports number 1 and 2 comment on the primary and fundamental aspects about Hong Kong local education which include education goals and substantial aids.
- ii) Reports number 3 and 4 are further observations in practical supplements which suggest the restructuring of the CDC and evaluate the free and compulsory education system.

- iii) Reports number 5 and 7 express a higher expectation of teacher quality and education quality in Hong Kong.

In the following section, a brief study of Hong Kong education policy in the future based on the document *Education Blueprint for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* will be studied.

### *A Hundred Years' Planning*

For the purpose of reflecting certain ideas contained on the document *Education Blueprint for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* published in March 1999, the researcher transcribed a brief proposal for Hong Kong education policy towards the next century in a document called *A Hundred Years' Planning* (the Introduction). Over 1,500 copies of the document were sent to the Education Commission, primary and secondary schools and newspapers in Hong Kong. The researcher's ideas about Hong Kong's general education in the future can be summarized into four points:

- 1) Practical step-by-step planning in education is of prime importance. For instance, the first ten years' goal is to increase the financial support to the schools; and the main goal of the second decade is to promote aesthetic education in schools, etc. Alternatively, running a number of different schemes at the same time that meet the necessities at different levels can also be considered (i.e. primary, secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels).
- 2) Education-for-all has two main scopes: micro and macro educational stages. 'Micro' means education on a school basis. 'Macro' means the idea of "education as a life-long pursuit" to the general public. These two concepts should be promoted at the same time by the government.
- 3) In order to improve the individual's competitive ability in society, it is essential to encourage the public's concept of re-education during life.

- 4) Aesthetic education has long been neglected in schools. A campaign called, for example, “One Person One Art” may be considered useful.

(Chan, 1999:1)

Music has long been considered as a common choice for arts education. In the following section, the aims and values promoted by music education will be considered.

## **2.5 Aims and Values of Music Education**

Music education has had its value in some form in human culture since primitive humans, the function of this relationship has remained the same: to assist in the enculturation of society by passing down cultural traditions, skills, and values through the performance of music. Thus music education is linked to human socialization in that both may be considered a social practice. (Kelly., 2002: 41)

Some topics in music education have been seen as traditional subjects and have been important to people for a long time, e.g. aesthetics, interpretation and appreciation of music. Nevertheless, neither the West nor the East seem to take the development of personal character and virtues by music education as important although people are aware that it has these effects on individuals. It is only in recent years that these areas have attracted the attention of some music educators. In a sense, when noticing the importance of the roots of music education, it is important to examine the field by probing its origin. Plummeridge said that:

... practical innovations inevitably led to a wider discussion of fundamental questions about topics such as the value of music in education and the nature of musical experience and understanding. Music education was beginning to expand as a multi disciplinary field of study in its own right and ... regarded as being some of the central issues of the day.

(Plummeridge, 1996:1)

This paragraph implies that the origins of music education, i.e. the value of music in education and the nature of musical experience and understanding, should be regarded as one of the central issues of today's music education. However, the value of music in education has different definitions for different people in different societies. People have different concepts of music education. Kohlberg points out that a first strategy for dealing with values in education has usually been called "character education" (Kohlberg, 1981: 1). In the following an attempt is made to find out the position of music education in general education and its significance in influencing students' character education.

### **2.5.1 Educated by Music**

Education is generally considered as a good force in human societies. It is inseparable from talk of what is worthwhile. Peters says:

We do not call a person educated who has simply mastered a skill even though the skill may be very worth-while, ...He must have developed some sort of conceptual scheme at least in the area in which he is skilled and must have organized a fair amount of information by means of it.

(Peters, 1967: 6)

It is a similar situation in music education. We cannot say a person possesses a good personality simply because they have musical training. Then, what should an educated person look like? Can we tell by their behaviour and way of speaking? Or can we sense and feel it by his disposition and personal nature? Peters suggests:

- 1) An educated man is one whose form of life, as exhibited in his conduct, the activities to which he is committed, his judgments, and feelings, is thought to be desirable.
- 2) Whatever he is trained to do he must have knowledge, not just knack, and an understanding of principles. His form of life must also exhibit some mastery of forms of thought and awareness, which are not harnessed purely to utilitarian or vocational purposes or completely confined to one mode.
- 3) His knowledge and understanding must not be inert either in the sense that they make no difference to his general view of the world, his actions within it and reactions to it or in the sense that they involve no concern for the standards immanent in forms of thought and awareness, as well as the ability to attain them.

(Peters, 1967: 9)

Peters believes that education does have significant benefits on people which can make 'educated' people different from the 'uneducated'. He thinks that an educated man can be noticed by his conduct, the forms of thought and awareness. Also, educated people should make a difference to their general views of the world by desirable actions and reactions. In addition, Peters suggests that people can be "...educated by reading books, by exploring their environment, by travel and conversation. Or even by talk and chalk in a classroom" (Peters, 1967:1). In fact, values affect the way people interact and what might become concepts of value should come not only from the classroom, but also from many other dimensions, such as music education.

### The Benefits of Being Nurtured by Music

Although music is not an important subject in school, it still has its value in education. For the Chinese, there is a famous idiom - “Music can polish disposition”. In the modern West, a similar concept is raised by O’Dea: “...musical enjoyment is intrinsically linked to virtuous behavior...” (O’Dea, 1993b: 242) O’Dea also suggests that learning how to perform musical work can foster the acquisition and exercise of certain morally relevant and desirable character traits and dispositions. Such learning contributes in some way to the development of practical wisdom (O’Dea, 1993b: 234). In short, it is believed that through music education, disposition and wisdom can be polished.

Enhancing personal disposition is a basic doctrine in education and music education can improve personal character. These principles are strongly established in the process of human history. The value promoted by music education for personal development is going to be discussed in the following.

#### **2.5.2 Personal Development: Values Promoted by Music Education**

When people say something is worthwhile, there should be some guidelines of standards or beliefs which make the result a positive consequence. Haydon (1992: 7-8) suggests that there are three aims of education: knowledge for its own sake; happiness; and autonomy. These aims are also valid when referenced to music education. For example, O’Dea (1993b: 234) explained the connection between musical performance training and people’s conduct: “...music in performance constitutes in effect a form of virtuous conduct”. In the following, possible effects on music instrumental pupils are



observed by Holman-Fox:

- 1) Writing is better. Children take down music in dictation every day and this improves their ability to shape letters.
- 2) Reading is better. In the process of reading children gradually learn to recognize letters, then words, then sentences. In music they learn to recognize notes, phrases and read ahead – this prepares them for reading words. When learning songs they also practice reading – improving the quality of other reading.
- 3) Arithmetic and figures are better. In rhythm training the child adds and divides figures. Fractions do not pose a problem to the child as he is used to dividing semibreves into crotchets, quavers and semi-quavers.
- 4) Ear training increases speech fluency. Music training helps students in the learning of a foreign language.
- 5) Memory training is aided and powers of concentration improved.
- 6) Playing a musical instrument develops manual dexterity.
- 7) Aesthetic awareness and sensitivity to color helps facility for drawing.
- 8) The orderliness of musical mentality assists a good sense of form and musical analysis helps them to think logically.
- 9) Ensemble playing and singing enables pupils' social adaptability and a sense of responsibility.
- 10) Students' developed aesthetic sense affects their personal cleanliness and their respect for their surroundings.
- 11) Students' standard of achievement is higher and their behavior more disciplined.

(Holman-Fox, 1993: 45-46)

### **2.5.3 The Position of Music in the Curriculum and as a Recreational Subject**

On the other hand, in the West, an early report stated that since the First World War the position of music in the British curriculum was merely as a recreational subject confined to singing, listening, historical development of music, and the playing of instruments (*Teaching of Music in Secondary Schools*, 1960: 1). This phenomenon is similar to that in Hong Kong. Another report remarks: "Music, a long established

school subject ...is designed to achieve a broad range of goals and provide a wide range of experience for students. It is both an academic discipline and an art form, and music teaching involves a great variety of techniques, concepts and expressions...” (Lowe, 1998: 37)

Usually, music is treated as both an academic discipline and an art form on a school basis. Probably for this reason, the content of the examination is comparatively wide in its content when compared to, for example, ABRSM/TCL music examinations in which music is treated as an extra-curricular activity (school principals’ suggested ideas as to why very few students attend HKCEE/HKALE music examinations below was that the majority of students treat music as an unimportant subject).

Although there are good reasons for educating children musically, it is still disappointing when we look into the Hong Kong music curriculum -- usually only once or twice per week for forty minutes each lesson. Generally speaking, the situation will only be better if the school principals think that music education should be more encouraged, or usually, for upgrading the school’s image. School principals always give the priority to employing a teacher for another more important subject rather than a second music teacher (telephone interview with Mr. Sui, appendix X, S3). In this case, extra-curricular musical activities would be arranged for their students after school-time (e.g. school choir, school band or school orchestra).

In the following section, the ways in which personal disposition, morality and virtues can be affected by musical training are going to be studied.

#### **2.5.4 The Effects of Musical Nurture on Personal Disposition, Morality and Virtues**

Peters said that "...the child has to develop not only an abhorrence of the arbitrary, but also a more positive concern for the considerations that determine relevance." (Peters, 1981: 110) Peters points out that the most important thing that children should be taught during their growth is to make correct determinations. Thus personal disposition is an important issue. However, the question is whether disposition can be taught. If disposition can be taught, there should be subjects like justice, value, temperance, politeness, fortitude, honest or prudence, etc. Chesterton suggests that: "Every education teaches a philosophy; if not by dogma then by suggestion, by implication, by atmosphere. Every part of that education has a connection with every other part. If it does not all combine to convey some general view of life, it's not education at all." (Chesterton cited in Walsh 1995: 85)

Under this doctrine, music could not be described as an education if it conveys nothing worthwhile to people. For example, Aristotle points out that virtues are intimately connected with self-control (Peters, 1981: 107) while Smith suggests that "...what I have called basic moral rules might well be a necessary condition of rational morality" (Smith, 1970: 165). In addition, Peters suggests that: "The more familiar they become with such situations and with the internal commotion which they occasion, the more likely people are to be led by a variety of considerations to control their immediate responses." (Peters, 1981: 107)

It is understood that depending on the way in which people are being educated, they will behave in a particular way. For education by music, as seen above, music

teaching can be viewed as both a psychological and moral education which aims to inculcate self-discipline. O'Dea's observation: "One learns practical insight through belonging to a certain moral tradition or community the internalization of whose values 'disciplines' i.e. shapes and hones one's cognitive faculties, one's ways of 'seeing' or 'taking' the world, thereby engendering right and appropriate conduct." (O'Dea, 1993b: 235)

In this research, the answers to the questionnaires reflect the phenomenon that people do think that music education can enhance students' personal development (6 Research Statement, no. 1, appendix IX).

#### The Influence of Music Teachers on Students

A good music teacher should also consider pupils' character development in the process of musical training. As Rest said, "...The long-term goal of the psychology of morality, nevertheless, is to understand...moral behavior in real-life contexts" (Rest, 1986: 133). For example, in order to let the pupils understand the elegance and the nuance of musical learning, sometimes music teachers have to describe certain abstract meanings by, e.g., similes or metaphors.

On the other hand, teachers may need to present some practical examples of personal experience, experiences from daily life, or sometimes pick up some explanation by imagination to make students understand, for example, to quote Mozart's famous saying: "The notes should be played like flowing oil." Whereas, on the other hand, the ultimate goal of music education is not to make all students to become musicians or

music teachers, but to provide them with a reliable tool to help personal development. O'Dea suggests that "...excellence in musical performance requires the development and exercise of a species of reasoning and judgment analogous to practical wisdom such that seriously pursuing the art of music in performance is one very important way of practicing and developing the kind of character and vision required in the latter." (O'Dea, 1993b: 234) Haydon puts it:

If formal education is to pursue moral aims, there is the possibility that this might be done through aspects of the teaching of various subjects; or indeed that it might be done not through the teaching of subjects at all, but through the example set by teachers and generally through the ethos of the school.

(Haydon, 1992: 2)

In brief, the ways in which people should be brought up are that:

- 1) People should be brought up, by whatever means, to behave the way expected of them.
- 2) People should be enabled to think for themselves about moral questions.
- 3) People should acquire knowledge of a particular theory or doctrine about what is right and wrong, and then apply this.
- 4) People should develop certain virtues.

(Haydon, 1992: 28)

### The Practice of Education

Generally speaking, the beliefs about what constitutes goodness are universal up to a point, despite the differences in people's nationalities. For instance, in the middle of the Ming Dynasty in China, thinker Wang Yangming (1472-1529) pointed out that only by careful and rational investigation of events and things, can moral principles be understood and realized by people (Ebrey, 1996: 203). In addition, Wang believed that universal principles exist in every person's mind since "...people could discover

them by clearing their minds of obstructions such as material desires allowing their inborn knowledge of the good to surface.” (Ebrey, 1996: 203) To Wang, moral action results spontaneously from the extension or realization of knowledge:

...true knowing is not abstract intellectualization but is inseparable from experience. One does not understand filial piety if one does not practice it; any more than one understands pain without experiencing it. Knowing right from wrong leads to taking right action, as one is compelled to act upon what one truly knows.

(Ebrey, 1996: 203-206)

Wang believed that moral knowledge is innate in our mind and self-cultivation can be practiced in the midst of everyday affairs. Wang’s followers were affected by him and took Confucian thought in some new directions. For example, his pupil Wang Gen pointed out that social standing did not limit people’s possibilities for moral perfection and happiness came from the elimination of selfish desires (Ebrey, 1996: 206).

There are two contrasting theories in Chinese thinking about human nature. One says that human nature is originally good. Supporters of this school believe that people become bad because they lose and forget the virtues they originally possessed. Simply, this is the main reason why people need education. Another school of thought is that human nature is originally bad – this is why people need to be educated. Whichever belief people hold, the importance of education is strongly rooted in the Chinese tradition. Furthermore, it is believed that some extrinsic techniques can up-lift people’s character. In the history of China, playing musical instruments, chess, doing calligraphy and painting have long been popular activities among literate people. It is believed that by these activities personal nature can be polished.

## The Practice of Music Education

Referring these ideas to music education, instrumental students usually are asked to practice every day for a certain period of time. These kinds of practice cause students to develop good habits. In order to play a new piece accurately and fluently without error, students have to practice very carefully from the very beginning up to the last note of a piece. In order to achieve the goal, a lot of practice should be involved. This embodies the attitude of persistence and patience. O'Dea examined the relationship between musical performance and virtue by philosophical and empirical ways. She suggests that artistic education constitutes in effect a form of moral education (O'Dea, 1993a: 51). Furthermore, she quoted Aristotle's idea about music making (original sources for the *Politics*):

It is not easy to distinguish what power it has, nor for the sake of what one ought to partake of it whether for the sake of play or relaxation or (because)...it is in some respect directed to virtue and ... is capable of making the character of a certain quality habituating it to be capable of right enjoyment.

(O'Dea, 1993a: 51)

Although it is hard to distinguish the power of music and morality, O'Dea suggests six characteristics of the rewards of musical performance by giving examples from the situation of winners in music competition:

- 1) the status and prestige she enjoys in being thus a winner;
- 2) the respect she receives from fellow performers and music devotees in general;
- 3) deriving satisfaction from such deriving on her new original interpretation of a particular composition;
- 4) her developing, and deriving satisfaction from so developing, the ability to withstand the stress of performance and to play well under pressure;
- 5) her mastering, and deriving satisfaction from so mastering, various technical difficulties encountered; and
- 6) her feeling part of a long and noble tradition.

(O'Dea, 1993a: 52-53)

On the other hand, as has been mentioned before, Holman-Fox suggested some improvements for music instrumental students in which three viewpoints are similar to those raised by O'Dea. These are going to be discussed next.

Ensemble playing and singing enables pupils' social adaptability and a sense of responsibility (point 9):

It is true that musical players should be sensitive to the accuracy of notes, correct timing and rhythm. However, it is not absolutely correct to say that ensemble playing and ensemble singing inculcate social adaptability and a sense of responsibility in students. Broadly speaking, a sense of responsibility is very much dependent on personality. Also a player's performance in an ensemble group can be an influential factor as well. It is because people with an active nature are usually active in society as well as in musical ensembles. In addition, if people's performances in the group are comparatively good, they usually tend to be more willing to speak and express their ideas (and vice versa with passive and less successful players). Thus it cannot be said that a person is responsible simply because (s)he is a member of a musical ensemble group.

Peoples' developed aesthetic sense affects their personal cleanliness and their respect for their surroundings (point 10):

Generally speaking, musical training can enhance a person's aesthetic sense. However, here, the term 'cleanliness' is somehow too narrow in meaning. Probably 'goodness' would be more suitable for a broader sense. In other words, a developed aesthetic sense can make people respect their surroundings. In practice, musical instrument players have to cooperate and listen very carefully to the other players' playing while



they are making music ensemble. These activities can help students learn to respect others and consider situation of others.

Peoples' standard of achievement is higher and their behavior more disciplined

(point 11):

Accuracy of playing is essential to all musical players. Nevertheless, it is hard to agree that all musically trained people have a higher standard of achievement. A similar situation is that we cannot assume that a person who is studying is an educated person. Thus to say that people's standards of achievement are higher and their behavior more disciplined simply because they are trained musically, may be too deterministic to a certain degree.

In fact, debates that arise on the values of music education do not usually come from its nature, but from our point of view, attitudes, aptitudes and the circumstances. Langer's observation: "The dignity of music demands that it should be autonomous; its existence should have no explanation. To add 'meaning' to its sensuous virtues is worse than to deny it any virtue – it is, somehow, to destroy its life." (Langer, 1979: 236-237)

In the context of the above doctrines and values promoted by music education, the conflicts which occur in secondary school music curriculum in Hong Kong at present are going to be examined in the next section.

### **2.5.5 Conflicts which Occur in Secondary School Music Curriculum in Hong Kong – and Music Curricula Unlinked with Local Tertiary Education**

It has been shown that, whether in the East or West, music education is believed to be a worthwhile pursuit because it has its roots in goodness. Whether the promotion of the subject at schools is a success or not probably depends on how we treat it. Mui (1984, quoted by Ng and Morris, 1998: 40) reported that in Hong Kong only 78.96% of schools offer music up to form 3 (some private schools and international schools do not follow the Hong Kong school curriculum). On the other hand, in the same report Wong (1990) pointed out that there was a sharp decrease of music teachers between form 3 and form 4. It is also found that at the senior secondary level (i.e. form 4 to form 7, age 16-19) music teaching normally does not prepare students for public examination, i.e. HKCEE/HKALE music examinations (Ng and Morris, 1998: 40). In Hong Kong, a single music lesson in secondary schools with only 70 to 80 minutes per week is usually recommended. When we compare this to other important subjects, such as English, we see that they may take up seven hours per week (Ng and Morris, 1998: 40-41).

The dilemma for music as a subject at schools is rooted in the difficulty of meeting the target. For example, the music syllabi provide little operational guidance to educators. As Ng and Morris point out: “There is no detailed description or discussion at all of the recommended music program, and the listening program, though stressed, is very narrow.” (Ng and Morris, 1998: 41) In addition, as the junior level music syllabus (1983 syllabus: 14) shows, popular music is specifically limited to pre-1950 material. Performing and composing activities are treated as additional or optional. Thus only part of what is normally accepted as a balanced curriculum has been

recommended. In addition, as music teachers at secondary schools are not obliged to follow the syllabi, this autonomy causes a great impact on the implementation as well.

Ng and Morris point out that:

The absence of a public examination and the advisory status of the national syllabus potentially allows room for a variety of aims and emphases which may vary from school to school and teacher to teacher. There is very little information concerning either the intended or implemented music curriculum. It is therefore important to look into how teachers interpret and implement the music curriculum in their schools.

(Ng and Morris, 1998:41)

In addition, music curriculum differs tremendously according to the background of the schools.. This phenomenon can also be grasped from the teachers' responses (section 6.3). Also, the role of school music teachers is one of the most important factors for promoting the curriculum. On the other hand, the music curricula which are unlinked between secondary school and tertiary education in Hong Kong is another conflict. This is going to be examined next.

### Tertiary Music Education in Hong Kong

In order to find out if tertiary music education in Hong Kong can provide skills and knowledge to support future secondary music teachers, the researcher collected the prospectuses of music bachelor degree provided by Hong Kong University (emphasis on IT), Hong Kong Chinese University (emphasis on composition), Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (emphasis on performance), Hong Kong Baptist University and Hong Kong Institute of Education. It finds that only the courses provided by Hong Kong Institute of Education and Hong Kong Baptist University are

relevant to this research. There are going to be explained next.

The requirements for entry to the BA (Hons) in Music at Baptist University are that:

- 1) The first AL subject can be substituted by GCE Advanced Level Music (or an acceptable equivalent qualification); and
- 2) Applicants should have attained Grade 5 in theory and Grade 8 in a practical subject offered by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music or equivalent; and
- 3) Applicants must pass an audition on the major instrument and musicianship, music theory and music history tests administered by the Department of Music and Fine Arts.

(Prospectus of Faculty of Arts, H.K. Baptist University, 2002:2)

The Baptist University prospectus said that the aims of the course are:

- 1) To provide a rigorous academic and practical education in music. The course design is based on the philosophy that the graduate is a person who can work independently, make critical judgments and solve complex problems. This is achieved by way of an increasing emphasis on independent work as the course progresses from year 1 to year 3.
- 2) To provide students with a practical and intellectual foundation for careers in music or music related fields. Students accepted into the course will have the opportunity to hear and interact with outstanding performers, scholars and composers from China and the Western World.
- 3) Students will also use the computers, electronic instruments, and recording technology available in the Electro-Acoustic Music Center, one of the finest facilities of its kind in Southeast Asian tertiary institutions, to broaden the traditional foundation of the course.
- 4) The strong emphasis on solo, chamber, and ensemble performance throughout the three years provides a rich experience in practical music making.

(Prospectus of Faculty of Arts, H.K. Baptist University, 2002:8)

The Bachelor of Music course provided by the H.K. Baptist University emphasizes the independent development, creative ability and IT knowledge of students. These are essential elements to become a successful music teacher at secondary schools. However, the content of the course is not designed specifically for teaching the syllabi

of HKCEE/HKALE music courses. The following is the description of the Bachelor of Music course provided by the H.K. Institute of Education:

The Music Subject Study aims to help participants become confident and competent music educators, who are critical, reflective and creative thinkers capable of designing and implementing an effective music program suitable for their students in secondary schools.

One of the key features of the subject is the integration of subject content with curriculum and methods, and of theory with practical skills. Participants will develop an understanding of how musical behaviors such as composing, performing and listening are to be valued in terms of “why” and “how” they are to be accomplished and enacted in teaching.

Class sessions will adopt a mixed-mode approach, which includes lectures on principles and theory, workshops on practical and creative music making activities, exploration of IT in the teaching and learning of music, and sharing sessions reporting on and discussing participants’ investigations and applications of theory and practices in music teaching.

(Prospectus of H.K. Institute of Education, 2002-2003: 110)

The music course provided by the H.K. Institute of Education emphasizes the training of suitable teachers at secondary level. However, the course is not specifically designed for training HKCEE/HKALE music student teachers.

Based on these findings, it can be seen that very few secondary schools provide HKCEE/HKALE music courses for their students. Undoubtedly, for this reason, there is no music course in any university in Hong Kong designed specific to train secondary school music student teachers in the HKCEE/HKALE music syllabi. Thus the contents of music courses at the universities in Hong Kong all enjoy autonomy and flexibility.

Before making suggestions for the reform of secondary school music education in Hong Kong (chapter 8), assumed findings and theories for this research would be attempted first. The following assumed findings and theories are based on the pilot study (section 5.7), literature review (chapters 2 and 3), comparison with relevant articles, journals, official documents (chapter 4) and similar experiences in other countries (section 3.2).

## **2.6 Value of Music Education: From the Point of View of International Prospective in the Future**

### Introduction

It can be seen from the study of the above chapters that whatever music education syllabus is being used in schools, whatever background the music teachers have, music education is always considered to be a subject of aesthetic education.

As a CD recording pianist in Hong Kong (the first Chinese recorded and published ABRSM grades one to eight piano examination pieces in 2002 and 2008, now preparing the Performance Diploma examinations CDs, to be produced by SONY DADC in 2010), the researcher also writes and publishes music education books. The new coming 38<sup>th</sup> to 40<sup>th</sup> books (for grade 8 students, performance diploma students, and teachers' diploma students respectively) are concentrated on philosophical training on piano examinations. The researcher finds that aesthetics is an important element in the subject of music education, whatever the lessons take place.

Furthermore:

- 1) A thoughtful consideration of strategies for successful teaching in both the required and elective music curricula is of prime importance.
- 2) Teacher's clarity and students' understanding of the purpose of daily and longer range instruction are critical in all settings and styles of teaching and learning.
- 3) A successful and sequential music program is dependent on the teacher's knowledge not only of music but of himself, his students and in increasingly complicated educational and cultural context characterized by struggles over curricular control.
- 4) Music education exists outside the schools and is a vigorous and growing subject for after school programs, private lessons, and community experiences. Because of this flexibility and complexity, even of its definition, there are many possible roles for music education in the schools and in society, and many ways for these roles to lead to substantive learning.
- 5) The classroom teacher has gradually been relieved of any responsibility for music education, and less class time is allocated to the music specialist for instruction.

(Colwell & Wing, 2004: back page)

In order to investigate the area from the point of view of international perspective, the researcher studied a number of up-dated journals and selected the following most appropriate materials by studying eight countries including Japan, U.S., England, Africa, Italy, Germany, Sweden and Hong Kong.

### **2.6.1 U.K., U.S., and Japan**

(Source from: Mertz, 1998: 72-77)

The purpose of the article emphasizes on some thoughts on music education as a global culture. The author's experience (professor of New Mexico Highlands University, US)

with the “International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme in Music” and “The International Baccalaureate Organization” delivers a certain thorough and rigorous curricula along with reliable and consistent assessment in approximately 900 schools which seem critical in the development of the idea of a global culture. It states that: “... in late 20<sup>th</sup> century media, from the television to the internet, have changed our heuristic notion of community. From all sources, we are confronted with contexts for our work and our lives which can be viewed or heard via electronic means....by the study of music that forms an essential part of the fabric of our lives. To be faithful truly to this idea means a constant awareness of and acknowledgment that the fabric may no longer be made only of the threads that were part of our own musical educations”( Mertz, 1998: 72). The following principles have guided the development of the most recent revisions of the programme that the author underwent:

- Students must participate in as many musical experiences as possible during the course of study; they may include performance collaboratively or singly, composition, and listening;
- Students must become proficient in the theoretical and / or notational system of the particular musical practice which is closest to them, and they must be aware of contrasting systems;
- Students must develop their perceptual acuity with regard to a variety of musical practices and be able to compare that which is most familiar to that which is most unusual to them; and
- Students must demonstrate their abilities to reason and reflect on their musical experiences and show their increasing understanding of the variety of music they encounter.

( Mertz, 1998: 73)



The author also studied the up-date situations of music education in Japan, US and UK:

- 1) Japan is devoted to the preservation of traditional music for the samisen, koto and shakuhachi, which uses this repertoire as a foundation for performance and composition, for the intensive study of its theoretical and notational system, for the development of perceptual, reasoning and reflective skills. Students will identify most closely with this music, while during the course of study, they will experience (perhaps) the music of a Viennese school (Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven or Schoenberg, Berg and Webern) as a contrasting musical practice.
- 2) United States is devoted to the preservation of jazz as a traditional American musical practice, which uses this repertoire as a foundation for performance and composition, for the intensive study of its theoretical and notational system, for the development of perceptual, reasoning and reflective skills. Students will identify most closely with this music, while during the course of study, they will experience (perhaps) the music of the Balinese gamelan as a contrasting musical practice.
- 3) England is devoted to the preservation of the western art music tradition of the common practice period, which uses repertoire as a foundation for performance and composition, for the intensive study of its theoretical and notational system, for the development of perceptual, reasoning and reflective skills. These students will identify most closely with this music, while during the course of study, they will experience (perhaps) the music of Ghana as a contrasting musical practice.

The dissimilar curricular contents within each school from these countries still have a

similar goal:

- 1) The development of appropriate musical skills for each individual student studying their music in a particular context.
- 2) Each student, in this vision, will also be studying with teachers who are masters in the music of that particular culture.

(Mertz, 1998: 73-74)

### **2.6.2 Africa**

(Source from: Nigeria, 1999: 72 – 87)

The article emphasizes the progression from traditional to modern. Meanwhile, the objectives of music education in African cultures are human oriented. African music education is largely an informal process, even in instances of musical families and music trades. But informality does not imply lack of philosophy and systematic procedure in transmitting the knowledge of a music culture. The first principle in traditional African music education is the encouragement of mass musical cognition through active participation. The participation enables the identification of special aptitudes and capabilities.

(Nigeria, 1999: 72 -73)

### **2.6.3 Italy**

(Source from: Tafuri, 1999: 88-93)

The author emphasizes learning through research method: “Research method represents scientific procedures involving cognitive processes that produce learning that is stable modifications of behavior. Research can be synthetically defined as ‘a method of learning or producing something in an intentional and systematic way, in order to solve problems” (Tafuri, 1999: 89).

The author said that the use of research in classroom activity is not intended to produce little researchers, but to orientate children towards scientific ways of thinking, to guide them to acquire more stable competences and to develop social behaviors sharing a learning process. In a sense that the general aims of music education are to develop oneself as a musical person enjoying music, to express oneself and to communicate with others through music. Techniques should come later (Tafuri, 1999: 89 – 90).

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In other words, music education can be considered a discipline in the broadest sense which gives the competence to become an autonomous and critical ‘enjoyer’ and producer of musical culture.

### **2.6.4 Germany**

(Source from: Gruhn, 1999: 57 – 63)

The article emphasizes intellectual growth which determines the function of music in education. The author points out that a musical composition is a product of historical,

aesthetic and cultural implications. These aspects are integrated into the work and surround it as the different layers of skins “around the core of an onion and at the same time they are melted with the core, are part of the core itself” (IJME, No. 34, 1999: 60). Furthermore, he gives examples to explain the situation such as “In the perception of art we reactivate internalized experiences. The religious intentions and aesthetic implications in Bach’s B-minor Mass are accessible through familiarity with compositional structures, techniques and figures of the Baroque. One must not literally know the names and forms of all rhetoric figures, one must not know about the doctrine of affections for an adequate understanding, but one must be familiar with the practice of musical style at a given time. This familiarity will be developed through the use of particular music in a meaningful situation.” (Gruhn, 1999: 61)

#### **2.6.5 Sweden**

(Source from: Stalhammar, 2000: 35- 45)

It emphasizes the spaces of music and its foundation of values, music teaching and young people’s own music experience: To elucidate how people relate to the phenomenon of music and to the teaching and the teaching structures in which they are involved, it is necessary to obtain as true a picture as possible of how people themselves perceive music. For examples, cultural outlook, framework factors, cultural heritage, environment, cultural capital, ideologies of teaching. These are some of the many factors which can contribute to the elucidation of action and interaction even if the focus of research is one special course of events (Stalhammar, 2000: 37).

Young people are among the largest consumers of music in society. Their interest in

music is to a large extent bound up with life style, fashion and different sorts of ideals. The music they encounter when they are growing up – be their participation active or receptive – accumulates to form a depot of experience in a longitudinal respect. However, on the other hand, some processes such as educational philosophy, epistemological approach, didactic orientation, choice of method and choice of material will have a decisive effect on what the form and structure of the teaching will be (Stalhammar, 2000: 38 – 39).

It can be seen that music already plays a central role in the life of young people. Thus the principal focus of music education must not be on music as an independent artifact, but on how people relate to music as well (Stalhammar, 2000: 43).

#### **2.6.6 Hong Kong**

(Source from: Leung & McPherson, 2002: 67- 77)

The article emphasizes professional composers' and curriculum planners' perceptions about creativity in Hong Kong school music programs.

Traditionally, creative activities have not been a core activity in the music curriculum of Hong Kong schools. Hong Kong teachers tend to concentrate their efforts on Western art music, with only some Chinese music, music literacy, and aural training using a traditional academic approach to music instruction, with far too few opportunities for students to learn about other music traditions and to enjoy music-making and small group activities. It is suggested that classroom music should not focus exclusively on creativity but should also aim to nurture a comprehensive understanding of music, so

that what students produce will be of real value. In addition, creative activities should be both purposeful and valid. In this case, students should be granted as much freedom as possible when they create music in order to nurture genuine creativity and independent thinking. Also, teachers must have sufficient prior experience in composing so that they can guide their students to develop creative ideas. (Leung & McPherson, 2002: 67 - 71)

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Although Hong Kong music teachers have traditionally been reluctant to incorporate creative approaches in their classroom music programs, it is clear that the next decade will see enormous changes in the way that music is taught in schools. In general, the reflections of the professional composers and curriculum authorities who were interviewed in this study are helpful to the identification of solutions for the many problems that confront teachers in Hong Kong schools. Although many problems remain to be solved, there is also evidence that solutions are available for teachers who are willing to experiment with new ways of teaching that incorporate more student-centered creative approaches to music teaching and learning. (Leung & McPherson, 2002: 76)

## **2.7 Summary of this Chapter**

This chapter has reviewed the present situation of education in Hong Kong (section 2.1) and introduced the seven important education policy-making bodies (section 2.2). Meanwhile, six Education Commission Reports whose contents concern music education policy in secondary schools were examined (section 2.3). Furthermore, the perspective of Hong Kong education towards the new millennium was studied

(section 4.2). Before this thesis moves on to consider secondary school music education and music curriculum in Hong Kong (chapter 3), the aims and values of music education have been scrutinized in section 2.5 and the conflicts that occur between these principles and the practical situation of present Hong Kong secondary school music curriculum have been studied in section 2.5.5.

## **Chapter 3: Secondary Schools Music Education and Music Curriculum in**

### **Hong Kong**

#### Introduction

On the one hand, private music tuition in Hong Kong is popular and it enjoys a relatively high status in evaluation (interview feedback by Mr. Yu, appendix X). On the other hand, school examinations are very frequent in Hong Kong and students rarely have spare time to do any extra-curricular activities. If students do well both in academic and music examinations, it is usually believed that the student possesses outstanding potential and ability. In addition, the goal of quality education enables schools to encourage their students to participate in certain activities such as the Hong Kong Schools Music and Speech Festival. This is the most welcomed annual event among schools in Hong Kong (it celebrated its 62<sup>nd</sup> anniversary in 2009). Usually the higher the quality and results of a school's musical achievement at the Festival, the better the image of the school. For this reason, many schools give credits to pupils' music performance when they make applications. All-round high quality education becomes important.

In the Education Commission Report no. 7 (1996: preface), it was said that quality education should aim at equipping students "with the knowledge, skills and attitudes which help them to lead a full life as individuals and play a positive role in the life of the community" For music education, Abbs remarks: "...the real function of music begins at a point where words, intellectually apprehended, have no place. Its inherent significance is outside the range of the purely rational mind." (Abbs, 1991: preface) How to put music as a useful tool in the content of curriculum best to benefit students at the best becomes an art of evaluation and selection.



The previous chapter introduced Hong Kong's education background and the present situation of secondary school music curriculum. The aim of this chapter is to summarize an extensive review of journals and literature pertaining to the study of:

1. the definition of music education and relevant component elements of the present Hong Kong secondary school music curriculum (section 3.1);
2. the way in which music is covered and operates in the curriculum in different cultural environments - a comparison between the U.K. and Singapore (section 3.2); and
3. significant studies in the field (section 3.3).

The literature review will be focused on summarizing on significant research findings and describing the conclusions that were drawn based on the review. Journals and literature selected for the review were limited to studies that specifically investigated the three concerns mentioned above and related materials that augment these studies.

### **3.1 Music Education and Relevant Component Elements of the Present Hong Kong Secondary School Music Curriculum**

#### **The Definition of Music Education**

Education is defined as “the act or process of acquiring knowledge” (*Collins Concise Dictionary*, 1995). Thus music education can be defined as the act or process of acquiring musical knowledge and musicianship. The three common areas usually covered in the subject are performing, listening, and composing. If music education is defined as the study of the learning and teaching of music, then the elements

concerned should be the learner, teacher and the subject matter, music. This may be illustrated in the following figure:

**Learner, Teacher and Music**

(Rainbow and Froehlich, 1987: 13)

Figure 3.1)

The figure shows the triangular relationship between teachers, learners and music. It can be seen that the central element inside the triangle is music instruction.

Music instruction is a complex element including, for example, instructional strategies, attitudes toward teaching, goals and objectives, learning and perceptual development, skills and knowledge. If lacking any of the three parts of learner, teacher, or music, music education will lose its logic and meaning. However, music education as an area for research is relatively untried when compared to other subjects. Rainbow and Froehlich observe:

Music education in the form of music teaching and as an area of interest has been in existence for centuries. As an area for research, however, it is still relatively young. For example, only within the past three decades has there been the opportunity for music educators to disseminate research-based information in journals that are specifically geared toward the field of music education.

(Rainbow and Froehlich, 1987: 11-12)

In the period 1970 to 2000, some research into music education in journals was published. Unfortunately, until today there has been no music education journal published in Hong Kong. The significant journals the researcher examined in section 3.3 are *International Journal of Music Education*, *Music Education Research*, and *British Journal of Music Education* in which some significant surveys relevant to this research were found. Other sources reviewed are drawn from relevant books dealing with music education.

### Component Elements of the Present Hong Kong Secondary School Music Curriculum

The curriculum components that follow are based on the above-noted definition of

music education, i.e. the act or process of acquiring musical knowledge. Music lessons in form 1 to form 3 are compulsory in Hong Kong, based on the 9-year free education policy. Music lessons for form 4 to form 7 students are optional. Probably for this reason, only form 1 to form 3 music textbooks are published in Hong Kong. In order to study the present Hong Kong secondary school music curriculum, the materials being studied are form 1 to form 3 music textbooks (section 3.1.1); HKCEE /HKALE music syllabi (section 3.1.2); HKCEE/HKALE music past year examination papers (section 3.1.3); an HKCEE/HKALE examination reports (section 3.1.4).

### **3.1.1 Form 1 to Form 3 Music Textbooks**

As has been mentioned before, only form 1 to form 3 music textbooks are published in Hong Kong. The researcher chose one reference book (named *Chinese Music*) and three textbooks (form 1 to form 3) for study.

Dr. Cham Lai Shuk-ching points out that there are very few books dealing with Chinese music in Hong Kong for educational purposes (*Chinese Music*, 1988: iv). *Chinese Music* is written for secondary and primary schools teachers and students, as well as for the Hong Kong public (*Chinese Music*, 1988: 2). The other source *Approach to Music* is a series of three volumes (form 1 to form 3) secondary school music textbooks, first published in 1989. The books are written in accordance with the secondary music syllabus recommended by the Curriculum Development Council. The contents are mainly divided into three areas: listening program, activities and songs. In addition, some materials are provided as a teacher's guide. These include a set of CDs for listening program, a set of CDs for accompanying the songs, and a

teacher's handbook providing supporting materials, and model answers to the questions. Each book has 150 pages with the following contents:

***Approach to Music, forms 1 – 3 Music Textbooks, Contents of Lessons***

	<b>Lessons</b>	<b>Contents</b>
<b>Book 1</b> (Form 1)	1-4	Notation
	5-10	Time
	11-15	Scales
	16-17	Rhythm
	18	Musical Form
	19	Vocal Music
	20	Instrumental Music
	21	Chinese Musical Instruments
<b>Book 2</b> (Form 2)	1-3	Music in the Romantic Period – Expressive Aims and Subjects
	4-6	Music and Stage
	7-9	Nationalist Music
	10	Music in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century – New Tonality System
	11	Influence of Folk Music
	12-13	Popular Music
	14-15	Chinese Instrumental Music
<b>Book 3</b> (Form 3)	1-6	Music – Melody, Rhythm, Time, Etc.
	7-9	Music in the Baroque Period
	10-12	Music in the Classical Period
	13-14	Chinese Opera and Ballad

(Table 3.2)

It can be seen that the contents of the textbooks range widely in accordance with the lesson planning. Because there are no HKCEE/HKALE music textbooks published in Hong Kong, the HKCEE and HKALE syllabi are going to be studied next.

### **3.1.2 HKCEE and HKALE Music Syllabi**

Generally speaking, a promising syllabus would possess the following characteristics: pupils are actively involved in the learning process; teachers are well versed in the knowledge as well as efficient at choosing materials in the classroom; and both pupils and teachers find the content of the curriculum to be interesting, valuable, meaningful and up to date. However, the HKCEE and HKALE music syllabi have long been criticized as being intensive, difficult and too broad in content. Usually, school is an ideal place to promote music to the students, especially when education is free and compulsory. For this reason, a sound school music curriculum becomes important for the subject's development on the school level. What is the characteristic of a sound music curriculum? Leonhard and House suggest that:

Curriculum building in music education includes the formulation of objectives for the music education program, the organization of classes and activities in which to achieve the objectives, and the selection of experiences that are appropriate to the classes and activities and will contribute to pupil growth toward the objectives. The task of selecting experiences also implies concern with the selection of teaching materials.

(Leonhard and House, 1972: 24)

Leonhard and House suggest that a sound music curriculum should include three main dimensions: i) the objectives of the music education program; ii) the organization of classes and activities; and iii) the selection of experiences. Nevertheless, if teachers choose to teach HKCEE/HKALE music, they have to follow the syllabi. Their autonomy and authority with regard to organizing and selecting teaching content will be limited unless they do not enter their students for the examinations. The other main obstacle for the subject's development is lack of teaching resources and support. This will be further discussed in section 3.3.3 and 8.3.

### The Nature of HKCEE/HKALE Examinations

HKCEE and HKALE examinations are held by the Hong Kong Examinations Authority. The Authority was established in 1977 and its main role is “to improve and rationalize the examination system in Hong Kong as well as to make more efficient use of human and technical resources” (*HKCEE Regulations and Syllabuses*, 2001: 5). Before 1977, there were three major public examinations in Hong Kong: the Certificate of Education Examination, the Chinese University of Hong Kong Matriculation Examination and the Hong Kong University Advanced Level Examination. It was believed that the centralization of the Hong Kong Examinations Authority “would lead to greater cost effectiveness by standardizing procedures and pooling the limited and specialized human and technical resources available. The aim was also to maintain a more stable and dedicated workforce.” (*HKCEE Regulations and Syllabuses*, 2001: 5)

The primary purpose of the HKCEE examination is to measure the attainment of students who have completed a full-time secondary school course of five years’ duration (*HKCEE Regulations and Syllabuses*, 2001: 6). The examination is conducted annually in April and May by the Authority under the Hong Kong Examinations Authority (Amendment) Ordinance 1993. Music is one of the examination subjects and the aims of the music syllabus are to encourage the habit of listening intelligently to music, to develop music literacy and to have a general understanding of Western and Chinese music culture. Also, all candidates will be expected to have some basic familiarity with both Western and Chinese music. (*HKCEE Regulations & Syllabuses*, 2001: 317) The examination consists of the following compulsory papers:

<b>Paper 1</b>	Practical Test	15%	About 10 minutes
<b>Paper 2</b>	Listening Test	25%	1.5 hours
<b>Paper 3</b>	Theory & History of Music	25%+35%	3 hours

(Table 3.3)

### Paper 1: HKCEE

Paper 1 is conducted individually and any musical instrument may be offered, Western or Chinese. The aim of this part is to test general musicianship. Rudimentary instrumental or vocal technique is required (some additional credit will be considered for higher standards of attainment (*HKCEE Regulations & Syllabuses*, 2001: 317). Candidates with the ABRSM (or equivalent, e.g. TCL, etc.) qualifications in any instrument or voice, or practical musicianship at grade 4 or above may claim exemption from this paper. Marks will be awarded according to the following scale, out of a maximum of 15 (ABRSM):



### Marks Award by ABRSM Results for HKCEE Music Examination

ABRSM Grades	Marks (out of 100)
4 (pass, merit or distinction)	8
5 (pass, merit or distinction)	9
6 (pass or merit)	10
6 (distinction)	11
7 (pass or merit)	12
7 (distinction)	13
8 (pass or merit)	14
8 (distinction)	15

(*HKCEE Regulations & Syllabuses*, 2001: 318)

(Table 3.4)

It can be seen that the Authority recognizes the ABRSM/TCL music examination results.

#### Paper 2: HKCEE

The objective of paper 2 is to test candidates' aural ability: three excerpts of Western music and one excerpt of Chinese music will be heard. Questions will be asked relating to such areas as rhythm, tonality, melody, harmony, instrumentation, form, texture and relation to historical context (*HKCEE Regulations & Syllabuses*, 2001: 318).

### Paper 3: HKCEE

The objective of paper 3 section A is to test candidates' ability in musical creativity and basic melodic/harmonic writing skills. Knowledge of a regular range of standard orchestral instruments is expected as well. These include:

- a) single-line melodic writing in the form of theme and variation, extension and completion of given melodic ideas.
- b) simple 4-part harmonization.

(Both the above writing techniques may involve simple modulation to closely related keys.)

For paper 3 section B, candidates will be required to answer a number of general questions in part (a) Western music and some questions in either part (b) Chinese music or part (c) Contemporary music. In part (b) Chinese music, questions will be set and must be answered in Chinese (*HKCEE regulations and syllabuses*, 2001: 318-319).

On the other hand, both Western and Chinese music are also accommodated in the HKALE\* syllabus. The aim of the syllabus is to encourage candidates' intelligent listening to music and to broaden their musical literacy (*HKALE Regulations & Syllabuses*, 2001: 403). The examination consists of four papers. Candidates should take three papers in part A and one paper in part B:

[\*Note: For an account of the two levels, see below p. 84].

**Part A (compulsory)** – candidates must take three papers in this part:

Paper 1	Aural Test	25%	2 hours
Paper 2	Western Music Techniques	25%	3 hours

Either

Paper 3	Western Music History & Chinese Music Knowledge	25%	3 hours
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Or

Paper 4	Chinese Music History	25%	3 hours
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**Part B (option)** – any one paper:

Paper 5	Performance	25%
Paper 6	Composition	25%
Paper 7	Special Project	25%
Paper 8	Extended Essay	25%

(*HKALE Regulations & Syllabuses*, 2001: 403)

(Table 3.5)

#### Paper 1: HKALE

The aims of paper 1 (aural) is to encourage candidates to follow courses of study that are balanced and useful to a range of musical activities which include rhythm, melody, interval recognition, harmony, harmonic identification, discrimination, style and general knowledge (*HKALE Regulations & Syllabuses*, 2001: 404 - 405).

#### Paper 2: HKALE

The aims of paper 2 (western music techniques) is to familiarize students, through the process of analytical study and imitation, with some of the simpler and more common

techniques used by the composers of Western music between c. 1680 and c. 1945 (*HKALE Regulations & Syllabuses*, 2001: 405).

### Paper 3: HKALE

Section 1 of paper 3 (Western music history) requires candidates to demonstrate their understanding of the history of western music through the study of representative examples (syllabus, 2001: 405). Section 2 of paper 3 (Chinese music knowledge) requires candidates to demonstrate their understanding of Chinese music knowledge (representative examples are given in the syllabus, 2001: 406).

### Paper 4: HKALE

Paper 4 (Chinese music history) is divided into two sections. Candidates are required to answer two questions in section A and two questions in section B. Questions in section A are set on a chosen repertory of twenty two works grouped into four categories: instrumental music; operatic music; narrative music and modern works by Chinese composers. The works set for this syllabus are given in *HKALE Regulations & Syllabuses*, 2001: 408-409. Section B tests the candidate's general knowledge of Chinese music including outline history of Chinese music, music theory and philosophy (*HKALE Regulations & Syllabuses*, 2001: 409-410).

### Papers 5 to 8: HKALE

Papers 5 to 8 are optional papers. Candidates should choose one paper in the examination. For paper 5 (performance), candidates may offer either a Western musical instrument or a Chinese musical instrument. Paper 6 (composition) requires candidates to present a portfolio of not less than three of their own compositions

preferably in different media. These may be written in any musical style. For paper 7 (special project), candidates may offer a musical project of their own, not normally examined, for example: electronic music; arrangement; choral training; accompanying; improvisation; jazz techniques and conducting, etc. (*HKALE Regulations & Syllabuses*, 2001: 410-411).

#### Advanced Supplementary Level – AS Level

There is another relevant syllabus called Advanced Supplementary Level – AS Level. Candidates taking this examination can choose two papers from the Advanced Level syllabus with a total mark weighting of 100% (40% + 60%) from the combination of any two papers in part A and part B. In other words, the subject mark weighting 100% of AS Music will come from the combination of any two papers of 40% + 60% (e.g. Paper1 + Paper 2 / Paper 3 / Paper 4 in part A, or paper 2 / paper 3/ paper 4 in part A + any one paper in part B). The structure of the syllabus is:

#### **Part A**

Paper 1	Aural Test	40%	2 hours
Paper 2	Western Music Techniques	60%	3 hours
Paper 3	Western Music History & Chinese Music Knowledge	60%	3 hours
Paper 4	Chinese Music History	60%	3 hours

#### **Part B**

Paper 5	Performance	40%
Paper 6	Composition	40%
Paper 7	Special Project	40%
Paper 8	Extended Essay	40%

(*HKALE Regulations & Syllabuses*, 2001: 413)

(Table 3.6)

It can be seen that the HKALE music examination syllabus is wide and taxing – with

eight papers including aural test, western music techniques, Western music history and Chinese music knowledge, Chinese music history, performance, composition, special project and extended essay.

The above information shows the range of learning areas of the syllabi for HKCEE/HKALE music students. Although music is a highly neglected and minor school subject that attracts few candidates, the contents of the syllabi are wide in content and long in examination duration (4 hours and 40 minutes for HKCEE and over 8 hours for HKALE music examination).

In the following, the past year's examination papers will be scrutinized.

### **3.1.3 HKCEE and HKALE Music Past Year Examination Papers**

The researcher visited the Hong Kong Examination Authority and ascertained that 1995 to 2001 HKCEE and HKALE music question papers were available at the time of doing this research. Regarding the HKALE Chinese music papers, only 1997 Paper and 1998 Paper 4 (the section of Chinese music history) were found.

#### **Paper 1: HKCEE**

As has been mentioned before, HKCEE Music Paper 1 is a Practical Test. Candidates have to choose an instrument for this paper, or if they possess any equivalent qualification (e.g. ABRSM instrument playing results), 8 to 15 marks will be awarded (p. 80).

### Paper 2: HKCEE

Paper 2 (Listening Test, 1 hour and 30 minutes): Four musical excerpts are given and candidates should answer all questions (in either English or Chinese). For each excerpt, candidates will have three minutes to read the questions before listening to the recording of the excerpt. The recording will be played three times at two-minute intervals. After the third playing, candidates will be given approximately five minutes more to complete the answers. Questions include those on rhythmic pattern, modulations, chords, scales and harmonies; instructions to add expression marks, describe the texture and character of the excerpts and name the relevant instruments; and identification of find out similarities, the use of meter and change of tempo, and a possible date of composition, with the reasons, and to description of the relationship between the musical materials.

### Paper 3: HKCEE

Paper 3A (Theory, one hour and 15 minutes): Candidates have to answer all questions (in either English or Chinese). Questions include asking candidates to extend the given melody up to sixteen bars and end in a key required by the question; compose three sets of melodic variation on a given theme; and harmonize a four-bar melody in chord style.

Paper 3B (History of Music, 1 hour and 45 minutes): Candidates have to answer all questions (in either English or Chinese): part a) Western music and either part b) Chinese music or c) Contemporary music. For part a) Western music, questions may include musical period and style, meaning of terms, such as symphony, impressionistic techniques and percussion instruments, etc. For part b) Chinese music,

candidates must answer in Chinese. Questions include musical structure, history background and comparison of two pieces. For part c) Contemporary music, questions include musical elements, design and features, and orchestral writing of a specific composer.

It can be seen that the examination papers are carefully designed with different requirements on different papers. Level of difficulties and general abilities of the candidates should be considered. However, the very few candidates (section 1.1) indicate the fact that although the syllabi and examination papers are designed rather richly in content with particular requirements, the subject is not welcomed by the candidates. Is the effort being put in worthwhile? The following relevant examination reports may say something.

#### **3.1.4 HKCEE and HKALE Music Examination Reports: 2000**

For paper 1 (Practical test) in 2000, the report shows that only 14 candidates were entered for the HKCEE music examination. The instruments chosen were piano (5), other Western instrument (6), Chinese instrument (1), and voice (2). The report suggests that the overall standard is varied: two candidates were outstanding, most others were able to present good choices of pieces with musical interpretations, and a few were poor (HKCEE Examination Report, 2000: 449). For paper 2 (Listening test), the standard was varied but generally well attempted (HKCEE Examination Report, 2000: 449-450). For paper 3A (Theory), candidates' performance was varied from satisfactory to good (HKCEE Examination Report, 2000: 451).



There are three papers for paper 3B (History of music): a) Western music, b) Chinese music and c) Contemporary music. For paper a) Western music, 90% candidates took the English version and 10% candidates took the Chinese version. Those who took the Chinese version were weak in presentation and in understanding of concepts (HKCEE Examination Report, 2000: 451). For paper b) Chinese music, the marks gained by the candidates was generally satisfactory (HKCEE Examination Report, 2000: 453). For paper c) Contemporary music, very few candidates chose this section and many candidates showed insufficient experience of the music of this era (HKCEE Examination Report, 2000: 453).

#### 2000 HKALE Music Examination Report

For the HKALE in 2000 music examination, there were 43 candidates. The numbers of candidates choosing each paper were as follows:

<b>Papers</b>	<b>Number of Candidates</b>	
	<u>A level</u>	<u>AS level</u>
1. Aural	15	7
2. Western Music Techniques	15	22
3. Western Music History	15	4
4. Performance	14	19
5. Composition	0	0
6. Special Project	0	0
7. Extended Essay	1	0

Candidates' performance was generally good in paper 1 but not very good in paper 2. For paper 3(A) section 1, Western music history, candidates' performance ranged from poor to very good. Answers for section II (Chinese music knowledge) were poor.

For paper 5 (Performance), of the total of 31 candidates, there were 25 pianists, 2 singers, 3 violinists and 1 guitarist. The overall performance varied from weak to excellent. For paper 8 (Extended Essay), only one candidate took this paper. The performance was above average.

It can be seen that the performance of the candidates are not stable in different papers. In addition, the number of candidates is very few. Does this phenomenon also happen in other countries? The following section will deal with this issue.

### **3.2 The Way in which Music Curriculum is Covered and Operating in Different Cultural Environments – A Comparison of Hong Kong with England and Wales and Singapore**

Generally speaking, establishing the aims for music education at schools and selecting the scope of learning are important areas for forming a music education curriculum. In Hong Kong, the purpose of school music lessons is to “encourage the habit of listening intelligently to music, to develop music literacy and to have a general understanding of Western and Chinese music culture” (*HKCEE music syllabus*, 2001: 317). This will be compared in the following with the GCSE music syllabus in the U.K. because Hong Kong was a British colony (section 2.1.3) and was influenced by the British education system.

#### A Comparison with the U.K.

The aims of the GCSE music examination in England and Wales are:

1. to foster candidates’ musical sensitivity, creativity and aural perception through the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills, and the exercise of imagination;

2. to promote candidates' cultural development and involvement in music as performers, composers and listeners through the study of a wide range of music, including that which reflects the richness of our cultural heritage; and
3. to support candidates' personal and social development through creating and performing music with others.

(Appendix V: 1998:1)

The three component elements of the GCSE music examination are composing (assessed by coursework, weighting 30%), performing (weighting 30%) and listening and appraising (weighting 40%). It can be seen that composing, performing and listening are emphasized for both the HKCEE music examination in Hong Kong (section 2.1.3) and the GCSE music examination in the U.K. The other country going to be studied is Singapore that was also a British colony where the education system was influenced by the British culture as well. The component elements of the Singapore GCE (General Certificate of Education) music examination are different, to a certain degree, when compared to the HKCEE and GCSE music examinations. The Singapore GCE music examination components include:

Components	Contents
1	Unprepared and Prepared Analysis ( <u>compulsory</u> , 2 hours 30 minutes)
2	Harmony (2 hours and 30 minutes)
3	General Musical Knowledge (2 hours 30 minutes)
4	Aural Tests ( <u>compulsory</u> , 30 minutes)
5	Practical Examination (not fixed)
(GCE ordinary level / school certificate, Singapore, 2000:1, Appendix VI)	
6	Musical Perception (only for 'O' level music with higher music students, 2 hours 30 minutes)

(GCE ordinary level / school certificate, Singapore, 2000: 4, Appendix VI)

(Table 3.7)

### Comparison with Singapore

When comparing the HKCEE and Singapore GCE music examinations, it can be seen that the history of music is an important part for HKCEE (one hour and 45 minutes) while unprepared and prepared analysis is emphasized by Singapore (compulsory, 2 hours and 30 minutes). Not counting the time necessary for practical examination (i.e. music instrument playing), a total of 4 hours and 30 minutes is required for the HKCEE music examination but 5 hours 30 minutes for the Singapore GCE music examination (another 2 hours and 30 minutes for higher standard students). It can be seen that although the HKCEE music examination is criticized as broad and difficult in its content, Singapore GCE is even wider in comparison.

### **3.3 Significant Studies in the Field**

In order to concentrate on the materials most relevant to this research, the researcher examined a number of studies in the fields of music and culture: those of music as a school subject; of music as a marginal secondary school subject in Hong Kong; and of intentions and constraints in Hong Kong secondary schools music curriculum. A number of significant studies are chosen for these purposes and these are going to be examined next.

#### **3.3.1 Music and Culture: a General Study**

Stenhouse suggests that the classroom curriculum must generate a culture which is the basis of the lives and thoughts of the pupils (Stenhouse, 1967: 153). Usually, a school curriculum can be understood as a selection of culture. Thus the music curriculum can be understood as a selection of music culture for the students.

As has been said before at the beginning of this research, the content of the music curriculum in Hong Kong shows the characteristics of a mixture of Chinese and Western styles. Music teachers, as a result, have to apply these areas of musical knowledge in the classroom. However, school music teachers face difficulties because they must possess and teach both Chinese and Western music which is not easy. The 1998 HKCEE music syllabus indicates that the requirements and characteristics of music education at secondary schools in Hong Kong are:

1. both Chinese and Western music knowledge are expected;
2. listening skills are emphasized. Teachers should have some knowledge about aural training and provide suitable exercises for the students;
3. practical test, theory and history of music are required as well. Music teachers should be knowledgeable in these different areas; and
4. the total duration for the HKCEE music examination is long: 4 hours and 40 minutes.

*(1998 HKCEE music syllabus, appendix IV)*

Gruhn said that: “When talking about appreciation and the understanding of the cultural implications in compositions we refer to the aesthetic transformation of experience into art forms” (Gruhn, 1999: 59). There is no doubt that music education transfers cultural implications and that musical composition is a product of aesthetic and cultural implications (Gruhn, 1999: 60). Usually a music curriculum is complicated in its content which usually reflects its society’s complex custom, social musical genre and social attitude. Nzewi observes about the relationship of music and culture:

Any human group that has a distinctive body of music knowledge and practice which is passed on from one generation to another as a process, has an operative system of

music education, irrespective of its pedagogical manifestations... These, then, constitute the prerequisites, also the models, for meaningful, authentic music creativity or experiencing in any form within the culture.

(Nzewi, 1999: 73)

For this complex cross-relationship, unavoidably, musical conception and activities in a society reflect its musical norms which lead to the formation of its music education system. Leonhard and House suggest that the story of music education is inextricably associated with the cultural history of mankind. Culture is the manmade part of one's environment which constitutes the way of life of a particular group of people (Leonhard and House, 1972: 45). It is understandable that both music and culture are manmade, and music and culture cannot be separated. Also, the education system in general and music culture can influence a society's music education system. In Yosihiko's words:

Every musical genre is a latent cultural heritage. Some musical genres receive respect from indigenous and foreign peoples, while others disappear without being recognized as cultural heritage. In other words, a socio-musical system of teaching, playing, and listening may work favorably for a certain genre, but unfavorably for other genres.

(Yosihiko: 2001: 72)

It is understood that musical genre is a latent cultural heritage which forms the socio-musical system of music teaching and learning in a society. Together with the education system, a community's music education system is formed in its particular way. Although neglected, music as a school subject usually obtains the general public's high reputation on its function to transfer cultural heritage

### **3.3.2 Music as a School Subject: Amirize (1981)**

A relevant study found in this area found is a MA thesis by Amirize (1981) titled “Music Education in Nigerian Secondary Schools”. The essay tries to examine why music is not regarded as an important subject in the curriculum in Nigeria and suggests some reasons why it should be given the same degree of esteem as any other subject taught in schools (Amirize, 1981: Introduction). There are some similar factors when compared to Hong Kong’s situation:

- 1) The limitation of available resources in schools places the few qualified teachers in serious difficulties and consequently a good number of them continue to quit the job (Amirize, 1981: 4).

About 60% of the teachers who replied in this research said that teaching resources are insufficient and in-service training is not enough. The majority of the teachers do not teach the HKCEE/HKALE music courses (section 6.3).

- 2) School musical activities usually take the form of extra-curricula engagements and this is one of the reasons why school music has not been given any recognition as an academic subject (Amirize, 1981: 7).

This reason has also been supported in this research: see principals’ feedback on p. 177, 179 and 180; feedback of the teachers on p. 189, 190 and 193; Dr. Cham’s idea on p. 198; Mr. Siu’s telephone interview on p. 199.

- 3) School musical activities have always been associated with church and choral

singing. A few parents who consider music important sometimes provide private lessons for their children. (Amirize, 1981: 9).

This can also be reflected in Hong Kong where most parents support their children taking ABRSM/TCL music examinations under the arrangement of the music teachers.

- 4) There is the problem of striking a balance between the western and local traditional musical repertoires and what important aspects of music education to choose from a very wide area of study. (Amirize, 1981: 13).

This dilemma exists in Hong Kong as well (section 3.1, HKCEE and HKALE Music Syllabi).

- 5) Perhaps a more frustrating problem for the music teacher is likely to be the attitude of the headmaster [sic] and his colleagues in the school towards the subject especially in terms of the allocation of resources and a recognition for the subject (Amirize, 1981: 17-18).

This is similar to the idea expressed by school principals in this research (p. 179) and Dr. Cham's interview (p. 198).

- 6) There is no awareness that music education has any survival value. Consequently the degree of attention that they will give to music lessons will be quite negligible (Amirize, 1981: 19).



This point is supported by the information given above, specially pointed out by Ng that "...with a low status in the school hierarchy, puts the music teacher in a lonely situation..." (Ng, 1997: 153-154).

- 7) Bureaucracy is another obstacle which can stand in the way of the music teacher or of the school in which he teaches (Amirize, 1981: 20).

This characteristic of local education systems and policy has also been explored in related chapters in the present research, such as chapters 2 and 3. In addition, together with detailed description of the existing difficulty of obtaining CDC minutes or evaluation reports.

#### Music as an Extracurricular Activity at Schools

It has long been argued that a society's music genre is usually reflected by its popular music, not the traditional music education provided in schools. This dilemma seems not to be easily resolved. Extracurricular activity is defined as "programs and events, carrying no academic credit, sponsored and organized by pupils' or students' organizations or by the educational institution, designed to entertain, instruct, and/or provide exercise of interests and abilities; subject to some measure of control by the institution." (Lam & Wong: 1997: 135) Usually people treat music as an extracurricular activity. The following chart indicates factors affecting parents' choice of extracurricular activities in Hong Kong:

Lam and Wong (1997: 144)

(Table 3.8)

The first three priorities for parents in Hong Kong prefer are educational meaning, safety, and children's academic performance. Firstly, it has been discussed in section 2.5 that music has a high rank in educational meaning for people. Secondly, it is safe to learn music (mainly indoors, listening, playing or composing). And thirdly, it has been found that children's academic performance is usually higher if they learn music (section 2.5.2). For these reasons, it can be seen that although music as a school subject is usually treated as a very minor one, music is generally ranked as a very promising extracurricular activity. For example, choir is one of the most popular extracurricular activities at schools.

### Choir as a Popular Extracurricular Activity at Schools

Usually, the standard of a school choir reflects a school's interest in vocal music teaching. Normally in Hong Kong the choir rehearses after school hours and sometimes meets during lunch intervals. Because the supply of teachers of music cannot satisfy the demands of the schools, the working load of school music teachers is always criticized as overload and their job satisfaction is comparatively low in Hong Kong. As a result, very few secondary schools have succeeded in introducing and developing any instrumental experience for junior (form 1 to form 3) students. In order to understand and compare the music education in secondary schools in Hong Kong, a report appraising of secondary school music in Hong Kong in the 1970's will be studied next.

#### **3.3.3 Secondary School Music in Hong Kong: Foo (1973)**

T.W.P. Foo wrote a Ph.D. thesis titled "Survey Appraisal of Secondary School Music in Hong Kong" in 1973. The findings of the study were grouped according to the categories of Government Secondary School, Government-aided Secondary School and Private Secondary School in Hong Kong. The first two categories of schools are related to this research (it is not compulsory for Private Secondary Schools to follow the HKCEE/HKALE curricula and music is usually not included in the curriculum for private secondary school).

In Foo's thesis, there were only 10 schools in each sample – Government and Government-aided secondary schools. Foo suggested that such a small sample rendered many of the statistical methods meaningless and inoperative. Thus raw

figures and simple computations would yield the best description of all (Foo, 1973: 32). Similarly, Foo found that complicated statistical methods are not necessary to explain the data for the current thesis because the samples are small. Instead, a clear descriptive survey is required. Detailed discussion on the methodology is going to be examined in chapter 5. In the following, some major findings of Foo's 1973 survey are presented. The research summarizes and puts the information into sections A and B presented as bullet points.

A) Government Secondary Schools: Music Lessons in 1970s

In Foo's report, it shows that:

- 1) Music was not offered as an elective subject in any of the schools but was a compulsory subject for, at least, forms 1 to 3 in secondary schools (Foo, 1973: 33).
- 2) Two schools reported having compulsory music classes in forms 1 to 3; six schools for forms 1 to 4; two schools for forms 1 to 5 (Foo, 1973: 33). And,
- 3) In all of the schools lesson was allocated only one or two periods per week, each period 35 or 40 minutes long (Foo, 1973: 33).
- 4) 7 of the 10 Government secondary schools reported having 1 full-time music teacher; 2 had one full-time and 1 part-time music teacher; the other one had one full-time and 3 part-time music teachers (Foo, 1973: 33).
- 5) The teaching load of each full-time music teacher ranged from 360 to 1,200 minutes per week of music teaching. The mean was 736 minutes of music teaching every week (Foo, 1973: 33).
- 6) The mean size of class enrolment in music was 40.5 (Foo, 1973: 34).

- 7) Number of minutes of music instruction per week: in form 1, 58.5; in form 2 58.5; in form 3, 46.5; form 4, 43.8; in form 5, 60.0 (Foo, 1973: 34).
- 8) Some respondents were not able to say more than one or two words about the objectives of their music programs (Foo, 1973: 36).
- 9) The most frequently stated objective of school music education was:
- “To give pupils an opportunity to enjoy music.”
  - “To give pupils some musical knowledge.”
  - “To provide some relaxation for the pupils.” (Foo, 1973: 36-37)
- 10) The 7 most common activities in the music classrooms are (Foo, 1973: 44):

(Foo, 1973: 44)

(Table 3.9)

- 11) The extra-curricular musical activities of the schools mostly consisted of choral and instrumental groups (Foo, 1973: 46).
- 12) All of the schools reported having at least one choir; three of them reported having two. There is no school that had more than two choirs (Foo, 1973: 46).

13) Three of the respondents expressed frustration arising from the lack of guidance and leadership from the Education Department. Although they were to some extent free to develop their own curriculum, they complained of the lack of official syllabuses and guidelines. Two respondents felt that they were limited by the lack of suitable instructional materials. They found the existing textbooks and songbooks were either outdated or unsuitable for use in Hong Kong. Two respondents expressed the desire to have further training in music and music teaching, as they felt that any improvements of the music programs would be contingent upon their own abilities. Two other respondents found that they were satisfied with the existing programs (Foo, 1973: 51).

**B) Government-Aided Secondary Schools: Music Lessons in 1970s**

- 1) Music was a compulsory subject in form 1 to form 2 in two of the schools in the sample. In four schools, it was compulsory from form 1 to form 3; in four other schools from form 1 to form 4. One of the schools having compulsory music from form 1 to form 3 also offered music as an elective in form 4 (Foo, 1973: 52).
- 2) The music classes were assigned 1 or 2 periods per week, each period being 35 or 40 minutes long (Foo, 1973: 52).
- 3) One school reported that it had two full-time music teachers, the other 9 schools reported having only one full-time music teacher each (Foo, 1973: 52).
- 4) The teaching load of each full-time teacher ranged from 400 to 1,280 minutes of teaching music per week. The mean was 730 minutes of music teaching every week (Foo, 1973: 52).
- 5) The mean size of class enrolment in music is 40.2 (Foo, 1973: 53).

- 6) The length of time for music instruction per week averages 63.5 minutes for form 1, 63.5 minutes for form 2, 59.4 minutes for form 3, and 48.7 minutes for form 4 (Foo, 1973: 53).
- 7) The most commonly stated objective of school music education were (Foo, 1973: 55):
  - “To give pupils an opportunity to enjoy music.”
  - “To enable pupils to appreciate music.”
  - “To enable pupils to read music.”
- 8) None of the Government-aided secondary schools considered the preparation of pupils to pursue a career in music. Similarly, the preparation for the music examinations of the HKCEE or for the ABRSM was not considered one of the objectives (Foo, 1973: 55).
- 9) Listening and singing were the two activities conducted in all the forms (Foo, 1973: 58).

To conclude, Foo suggests that in Hong Kong there was a lack of clearly defined educational objectives for the music programs. The possible reason for this deficiency was a result of “an imbalance in the general educational policy; yet it might also have been the product of years of unquestioning acceptance on the part of the music teachers” (Foo, 1973: 104). Secondly, the content and activities of the music classes were largely traditional and short of innovations (Foo, 1973: 105). Thirdly, the teaching materials (namely the textbooks and song books) were mostly unsuitable for the secondary schools in Hong Kong (Foo, 1973: 105). Fourthly, the facilities and equipment for music instruction in secondary schools were found to be minimally adequate (Foo, 1973: 105-106).

### Main Points Raised from Foo's Survey

Based on the information given above by Foo, it can be seen that the situation of secondary school music in Hong Kong in the 1970s was already not promising. Firstly, music was usually considered as a leisure activity rather than an academic subject. Thus music was generally neglected at secondary schools. Secondly, teachers, resources and equipment for teaching and learning music at secondary schools were inadequate. Thirdly, education policy in Hong Kong was criticized as unbalanced. And fourthly, innovation and creativity were not emphasized and not developed well in music education at secondary schools.

### **3.3.4 The Music Curriculum in the Primary and Secondary Schools of Hong Kong: Wong (1990)**

Teachers' point of view and teachers training was the focus in this study (Wong, 1990: 2). In addition, teachers' ideas about the future direction of school music education after 1997 were investigated (Wong, 1990: 85). Teachers' qualifications (Wong, 1990: 97), curriculum structure from form 1 to form 7 (Wong, 1990: 110), teaching methods and attitudes (Wong, 1990: 112 and 136) are studied. These findings are similar to those teachers' revealed by the other studies, for example, Foo (1973), Ng (1997), and S.S.M.C. (1998).



### **3.3.5 *The Curriculum of Music Education from the Viewpoint of Asia: Takazawa (1990: 267-274) - a Treatment of Western Music and Traditional Music***

This survey report was written by Takazawa in 1990. The aim of the survey was “to focus on the curriculum of music education in Asia, showing the ways of treating western music and traditional music in various countries and discussing what the curriculum should be” (Takazawa, 1990: 267). The countries dealt with are Japan, Singapore and Thailand. The present researcher summarizes the reports in the followings.

#### Japan

The main point of the report “stemmed from consideration of a methodology of how to get rid of harmful influences existent in music education in Japan, with its one-sided teaching of only Western music.” (Takazawa, 1990: 267). As in Hong Kong, there are nine years of compulsory education from primary 1 to secondary 3 in Japan. However, as Takazawa reported, school music education in Japan produces music-haters (Takazawa., 1990: 267). Music education in Japan started to be Westernized in 1872. Takazawa suggested that music education in Japan should include Western music, Japanese traditional music and world ethnic music (Takazawa, 1990: 268). Music and culture cannot be separated or people will feel irritated for the isolation of their motherland’s culture from music learning (section 3.3.1).

#### Singapore

In comparison, Takazawa found that Singapore manifests her own traits in balancing between Singapore traditional music and Western music (section 3.2). Singapore is a multi-cultural society of Chinese, Malays and Indians. As in many countries, music

education is treated as a minor subject and a lack of music teachers is the problem for music education in Singapore – in fact there are hardly any colleges of music education in Singapore (Takazawa, 1990: 269).

### Thailand

Takazawa described school music education in Thailand as an integrated curriculum (probably in order to make it easier for students to obtain employment, it is less academic but more practical in nature). The contents are entirely different from the curricula of Japan and Singapore. The contents of 9-year compulsory education (primary 1 to secondary 3) in Thailand are:

#### **Primary School Level in Thailand**

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Skill – Thai Language and Mathematics</li> <li>2. Life experience – Science, Health Education and Social Education</li> <li>3. Personality, mentality and emotion – Morals, Art, Physical Education, Customs, Music and Dance</li> <li>4. Occupation – Agriculture, Home Economics and Crafts</li> </ol> |
|--|

#### **Secondary School Level in Thailand**

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Language – Thai, English</li> <li>2. Mathematics and Science</li> <li>3. Social Studies</li> <li>4. Personality improvement – Art, Music and Dance (i.e. Arts Education)</li> <li>5. Occupation</li> </ol> |
|--|

(Table 3.10)

It can be seen that although school music education does not develop very well in Hong Kong, the situation in Japan, Singapore and Thailand is even worse with more Limitations in Japan and Singapore, and being more neglected in Thailand (as

combined Arts Education). On the other hand, success or a failure of the Arts Education may depend upon a number of factors. For example:

- 1) The understanding, approachability, and value of the subject to the general public, especially the candidates.
- 2) The subject's recognition (local and / or international) by the general public.
- 3) The influence (or helpfulness) of the subject to the candidates' future career (usually concerns the earning a living).
- 4) The contents of the syllabus (i.e. level of difficulty and duration of examination time).
- 5) The support of the subject from society, schools, parents and students.

Earlier on, in order to gather more information about the then coming 2005 Arts Education curriculum, the researcher approached Dr Fanny Ng for an interview. However, the interview was declined because Dr Ng explained that she no longer worked in the field and had taken up a new academic post a number of months ago. She had no new ideas about current developments. Thus she could not provide any comment about up-to-date information. Instead, she recommended the researcher to study her Ph.D. thesis – *Hong Kong Music Secondary School Curriculum – Constructing Marginality 1997*. This is going to be examined in the following section.

### **3.3.6 Hong Kong Secondary School Music Curriculum – Constructing Marginality 1997: Ng (1997)**

This research began with the central aim of finding out the main features of the Hong Kong secondary school music curriculum and determining music teachers' attitudes towards its various components (Ng, 1997: 80). Ng explains that music involves a great variety of techniques, concepts and forms of expressions by a chart:

(Ng, 1997: 5)  
(Figure 3.11)

Because music includes the knowledge of, for example, periods, styles, forms and culture which belong to the curriculum, the world of music is thus huge and makes teaching it a hard task for teachers (Ng, 1997: 6). Also the promotion and achievement of a balanced music curriculum in Hong Kong is problematic and the lack of a long-term and far-sighted policy on Arts Education hardly giving any attention to it

are important issues (Ng, 1997: 8). Teachers face difficulties in teaching: “Non-participation in public examinations and the advisory status of the official syllabus potentially allow room for a variety of aims and curriculum practices, which may vary from school to school and teacher to teacher.” (Ng, 1997: 9) In addition, there is very little information concerning either the intended or implemented music curriculum in Hong Kong, and not much is known about how music teachers view or interpret it (Ng, 1997: 10). Because of these limitations, Ng concludes that music is a long neglected and marginalized area of the school curriculum in Hong Kong (Ng, 1997: 8). Ng explained the difficulties in this way:

The lack of access to official documents and the absence of information on music education in Hong Kong were, to a certain extent, a shortcoming of this research... there is very little information about music education in Hong Kong and music official documents, such as CDC minutes or evaluation reports, are not easily obtained... There is also no published studies on education adopting a symbolic inter-actionist perspective in Hong Kong.

(Ng, 1997: 113-114)

This phenomenon is caused by a general neglect of music education for children in a commercial society, and inadequate support from the Education Department of the Hong Kong Government (Ng, 1997: 129). Other factors may include:

1. low status of the subject compared to academic subjects;
2. the irrelevance of the official music syllabuses; and
3. the short supply of good music textbooks and song books.

(Ng, 1997: 129)

On the other hand, the following table shows the interviewed teachers' explanations

about the sources of influence on the music curriculum in Hong Kong (Ng, 1997: 150):

(Ng, 1997: 150)  
(Figure 3.12)

This chart is useful in comparison to the report of the questionnaires for music teachers (section 6.3). Similar findings are that:

1. school principals' attitude towards music gives it lower priority than other academic subjects;

2. other teachers sometimes borrow music lessons to cover their syllabuses, especially during examinations;
3. students regard music as a leisure subject;
4. school policies support other academic subjects and give relatively small resources and class time to music;
5. pop music is more welcome;
6. in-service training and resources to support teaching music are not enough.

On the other hand, it is said that the promotion prospects for cultural subject teachers, including music, were viewed as poor when compared to the academic subject teachers who gained recognition through attaining good results in public examinations (Ng, 1997: 153). Also, it depends upon where the school principal places priority (section 4.3.2). Many music teachers have to work alone to oversee all music teaching as well as all music extra-curricular activities in the school, which – with a low status in the school hierarchy – puts the music teacher in a lonely situation (Ng, 1997: 153-154). Isolation and autonomy become the see-saw advantage and disadvantage for the music teachers. Some teachers' viewpoints:

- 1) "They (other teachers) always have the wrong impression that I am free most of the time because I don't need to correct pupils' assignments or test papers."
- 2) "They often think that I have no work at all, just relax."
- 3) They envy the music teacher for they think that she can take a rest in teaching music. She does not need to finish the syllabus and doesn't need to stay behind for remedial lessons."
- 4) "Teachers who teach major subjects may think that music teachers are useless."
- 5) "They generally think that music doesn't need any examinations. It is singsong. The music lesson is just singing and making fun."

(Ng, 1997: 161-162)

Ng finds that music at school seemed to have an ambivalent status: “In the formal curriculum of school subjects, its status was low and this was made clear to music teachers by the actions and attitudes of fellow teachers. However, on the informal curriculum, it was seen in some schools as having a useful role for providing entertainment at school functions.” (Ng, 1997: 163) In addition, Ng points out that for pupils, music lessons are for making fun and pupils were usually labeled disruptive. From their point of view, music lessons should not be bookish or rigid and were not serious about studying music, going so far as to say that pupils find music lessons unrelated to their daily life. They were described as “useless” (“Useless” in the sense that music is not counted for streaming nor promotion in the internal assessment and outside school for public examinations, Ng, 1997: 164). Ng’s opinion was that: “Pupils were described as “practical” and “pragmatic”. They viewed the importance of a subject not only by their concept of “usefulness” but also by taking into consideration the subject for their career in the future.” (Ng, 1997: 165)

Ng concludes that the aim of music in school, as perceived by the interviewees, is to entertain guests during special school functions, and, outside school, to compete in music festivals to gain reputation for the school (Ng, 1997: 178). Furthermore, Ng said that the Hong Kong Government does not have a long-term policy on music education. Official documents such as Education Departmental Papers and Education Commission Reports hardly mention music nor provide a clear direction for Arts Education. In reality, pupils’ aesthetic development has been neglected (Ng, 1997: 270). The following is the cycle of constraints on the subject at schools. The detailed explanation follows in section 3.3.7.



(Ng, 1997: 276)  
(Figure 3.13)

The feedback from principals (section 6.2), music teachers (section 6.3), interviews (section 6.4), and students (section 6.5 to 6.7) reflect the constraints summarized in the above chart. It can be seen that the limitations for the subject's development comes from individuals (i.e. teachers) to the society as a whole.

### **3.3.7 Intentions and Constraints in Hong Kong Secondary Schools Music Curriculum: Ng and Morris (1998)**

A useful research paper *The Music Curriculum in Hong Kong Secondary Schools – Intentions and Constraints* was written by Ng and Morris in 1998. The paper has three purposes. Firstly, it reviews the official aims of the formal music curriculum as promulgated by the Hong Kong government (section 2.3 in this research). Secondly, it compares them to teachers' perceptions of those aims, and thirdly, it analyses the explanations of teachers for the pedagogic approach they emphasize (Ng & Morris, 1998: 37).

Ng and Morris's research paper points out that after a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collected by questionnaires and interviews, among performing, listening and composing, musical experiences associated closely with listening were perceived by teachers to be more important than the other components (Ng & Morris, 1998: 37). The research reported that: "What emerged most clearly from the explanations of the (music) teachers was the extent to which the prevailing ethos of schooling in Hong Kong, which places a premium on the transmission and objective assessment of academic knowledge, was seen to be a powerful influence on the music curriculum." (Ng & Morris, 1998: 37)

In Hong Kong, assessment based on knowledge is most important in schools. As a result, it is not easy to keep a sound and balanced music curriculum. For example, Ng & Morris' study suggested that the most important concern of the teacher is to provide guidance and encouragement to students who need plenty of background ideas and structure to compose (Ng & Morris, 1998: 38). Ideally speaking, teachers should provide varied experiences to students and encourage them to analyze what they hear in order to develop their ability to relate sound to symbol so that the students' knowledge and concepts of music will increase as a whole (Ng & Morris, 1998: 39).

However, school music lessons do not normally prepare students for public music examinations. Many secondary schools only offer music for one period per week. Not surprisingly, music has been viewed as weak among the other subjects. About the music syllabi, the research remarks: "The music syllabuses provide little operational guidance to educators. There is no detailed description or discussion at all of the recommended music program, and the listening program, though stressed, is very narrow." (Ng & Morris, 1998: 41) The other limitation is that secondary school music teachers are not obliged to follow the official syllabi. In other words, teachers can enjoy a great deal of autonomy. 'Sit and listen' is a common learning attitude in Hong Kong. Usually there are 40 or more students in a class. To control class order, teachers are inclined to allow as little movement as possible to their students. For this reason, watching music videos and doing worksheets are common activities in music classrooms (Ng & Morris, 1998: 48). These factors lead to the discouragement of students' creative ability.

Another problem worthy of consideration is that, as a minor subject, lessons supposed

to be for music tend to be diverted to other new subjects such as Putonghua (i.e. Mandarin) and Computer Studies which people think more important. Lacking support, music teachers often work alone and feel lonely and isolated (Ng & Morris, 1998: 49). In addition, even worse, some other classes may complain that the music class causes noise. It is understood that the teacher, for fear of creating disorder in his class, may abandon instrumental playing completely (Ng & Morris, 1998: 51).

There is also a shortage of musical instruments, or occasionally students do not even have a music book (teaching resources are insufficient: p. 189, section 3.1.1 – Secondary 1 to Secondary 3: Music Text Books). Then students do not have the initiative to learn. Sometimes the music teacher is forced to give up the related program (Ng & Morris, 1998: 53). In addition, it is suggested that the secondary school music curriculum in Hong Kong provides more support to pedagogy which focuses on listening rather than performing or creativity; thus music teachers tend to give the priority to the promotion of listening (e.g. for the sake of classroom discipline). Ng and Morris concluded: “Clearly, the promotion and achievement of a balanced music curriculum in Hong Kong must be viewed as problematic...music had a marginal status.” (Ng and Morris, 1998: 55)

It can be seen that the learning environment at secondary schools in Hong Kong restricts the students’ development in studying music. As a result, the music teacher has the major role in maintaining and promoting the subject in schools. This will be discussed in section 4.3 “The Changing Role of Secondary School Music Teachers in Hong Kong”.

### **3.3.8 The 1998 Document “Secondary School Music Course (form 1 to form 3): A Combination Brief Report of Questionnaire Investigation” (S.S.M.C.)**

A document called *Secondary School Music Course (form 1 to form 3): a Combination Brief Report of Questionnaire Investigation* (S.S.M.C.) was published by the CDC in October 1998. The feedback from the secondary school music teachers and the conclusions provided in this document are useful for this research because:

- 1) The situation of secondary school music education in form 1 to form 3 (i.e. junior secondary) is a basic underpinning for form 4 and form 7 (i.e. senior secondary) music education relating to the HKCEE/HKALE music syllabi.
- 2) The information can be used as a guideline to explore the most up-to-date situations of secondary music education in Hong Kong.
- 3) The document acts as a signpost for the present researcher to determine if the research questions are suitable, correct, and up-date, and to prevent repeating the research.
- 4) The information can help the researcher to work more directly and in greater depth about the core issues in the field, i.e. to avoid double work, and, it is hoped, make the content of the questionnaires more precise in nature.

Dr. Fanny Ng kindly sent the S.S.M.C. document to the researcher in October 1998 in response to a request. The document was printed in Chinese. The researcher translated it into English (Appendix VI). Some appropriate areas are selected for the purpose of this research and nine relevant items are chosen. These were:

- 1) The secondary school music curriculum (S.S.M.C., 1998, section 2.1).

- 2) The number of secondary school music teachers (S.S.M.C., 1998, section 2.2).
- 3) Teaching resources for secondary school music (S.S.M.C., 1998, section 2.3).
- 4) Music teachers in secondary school (S.S.M.C., 1998, section3).
- 5) Ideas about the present secondary school music curriculum – the summary (S.S.M.C., 1998, section 3.2).
- 6) Suggestions for classroom musical activities and their scope (S.S.M.C, 1998, section 3.3).
- 7) The necessity of in-service training for teachers (S.S.M.C, 1998, section 3.5).
- 8) Seven points raised by the document (S.S.M.C., 1998, section 4).
- 9) Additional area: the ‘new’ secondary music syllabus (S.S.M.C., 1998, section 5).

These are going to be examined in more detail next.

#### **3.3.8.1 Music Curriculum in the Secondary School (S.S.M.C., section 2.1)**

Usually, secondary music teachers in Hong Kong teach music from form 1 up to form 7. There were 431 teacher respondents for the S.S.M.C. survey in total. It reported that the number of music lessons provided at secondary schools was:

- i) 2 music lessons per week: form 1 (56%) and form 2 (54.3%)
- ii) 1 music lesson per week: form 3 (53.1%)
- iii) no music lesson at all : form 4 (75.3%), form 5 (79.5%), form 6 (91.6%) and form 7 (93.1%)

These figures show that the majority of secondary schools provide no music lesson

after form 3 (from 75% up to over 93%). For this reason, the majority of secondary schools do not prepare their students to take music examinations (S.S.M.C., 1998: 1). Undoubtedly, if schools do not encourage music lessons, the number of music candidates will not grow. For example, from 1996 to 1998, over 80% of secondary schools did not prepare form 4 and 5 students to participate in the HKCEE music examination and over 95% students did not participate in the HKALE music examination (S.S.M.C., 1998: 1).

### **3.3.8.2 The Number of Secondary School Music Teachers (S.S.M.C., section 2.2)**

Although not all forms in secondary schools provide music lessons, music teachers are present in 99% of secondary schools:

**Number of music teachers in secondary schools**

<b>in Hong Kong</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
0	1%
1	68%
2	29%
3	2%

\*The average number of music teacher in each secondary school is 1.324

(S.S.M.C., 1998:1)

(Table 3.14)

About 70% secondary schools have 1 music teacher while only about 30% schools have 2 music teachers (usually a standard secondary has over 1,000 students from form 1 to form 7). It can be seen that the workload for the music teacher is heavy. In the following, teaching resources for secondary school music classroom will be studied.

### 3.3.8.3 Teaching Resources for Secondary School Music Classroom (S.S.M.C., section 2.3)

For the 99% secondary schools teaching music, the average number of musical instruments provided in secondary schools is very small:

<b>Instruments</b>	<b>Average number</b>
Piano	1.905
Percussion	1.519
Electronic Keyboard	1.354
Western Instruments	0.926
Chinese Instruments	0.633
Others	0.414

(S.S.M.C., 1998:2)

(Table 3.15)

Obviously, the numbers of instruments are far from sufficient. In addition, the following figures show the average number of music textbooks being used at secondary schools in Hong Kong:

<b>Music Textbook</b>	<b>Average Number (per school)</b>
Teaching Textbook	1.844
Musical Reference	1.321
English Songs	1.317
Chinese Songs	1.288
Musical Methodology	1.185
Western Music Score	0.862
Chinese Music Score	0.608
Others	0.346

(S.S.M.C., 1998:2)

(Table 3.16)



On the other hand, S.S.M.C. also reports that some music subject officers (i.e. the leading music teacher where schools have 2 or more music teachers) considered the teaching materials as inadequate:

Some music subject officers suggested to add some supplements like computers, higher -projector for computer, software, MIDI keyboard, electronic facilities, electronic keyboard and printers. Also some hardware such as TV set, video recording set, higher projector, higher projector screen, humidity-prevention machine, sound recorder, moveable performance stands (for choirs), white board, and storage cabinets, etc.

(S.S.M.C., 1998: 2)

In the following section, information about secondary schools music teachers is going to be examined.

#### **3.3.8.4 Music Teachers in Secondary School (S.S.M.C., section 3)**

20.2% of secondary school music teachers were male and 79.8% were female (S.S.M.C., 1998:3). To show their age diagrammatically:

<b>The Age of Music Teachers in Secondary Schools</b>		<b>Percentage</b>
30 or below		42.1%
31-40		39.1%
41-50		14.4%
Above 50		4.4%

Total: 100%

(S.S.M.C., 1998: 3)

(Table 3.17)

Secondary school music teachers holding bachelor's degree was the most common (42.08%); master's degree or above was less usual (13.24%). Specifically to musical training, the report found that teachers holding music teacher certificates were 43.9%; music bachelor's 46.4 % (music as major or minor subject); university teaching diploma 18.8% (music as major or minor subject); master's degree or above 9.3 % (music as major or minor subject); and others 13.5 % (e.g. ABRSM certificates) [S.S.M.C., 1998:3].

In the following section, music curricula at secondary schools will be studied.

#### **3.3.8.5 Music in the Secondary School Classroom (S.S.M.C., section 3.2)**

The following figure indicates music teachers' ideas (similar compared to the feedback in section 6.3, part B: about the HKCEE/HKALE curricula) about the link between secondary and primary music curricula:

(S.S.M.C., 1998: 5)  
(Figure 3.18)

It shows that only 14.8% of secondary music teachers considered that the music

curricula of primary and secondary schools are linked. In total only 26.6% secondary music teachers expressed their opinions about the curricula. 73.4% of the responses said that they were not sure or had no idea. These figures reflect the fact that more than two thirds of secondary music teachers do not consider this matter as a problem, or probably, just ignore it. In reference to the link between junior secondary and senior secondary school music curricula, the report reflects the fact that only 13.7% secondary music teachers agree that the junior and senior secondary school music curricula are linked while 20% disagree, 22.2% are not sure about this and 44.1% music teachers have no opinion (S.S.M.C., 1998: 5). These results signify that most secondary school music teachers are unlikely to be satisfied about the link between the curricula. When asked if there are any advantages in forms 1 to 3 music lessons provided, in total 477 ideas from secondary school music teachers were received:

- 1) 238 think that current secondary music curriculum is rich in content, broad, and organized systematically;
- 2) 39 think that the music curriculum is balanced;
- 3) 25 think that the curriculum is not too difficult nor too easy;
- 4) 23 think that the content is a good combination of both Chinese and Western music; and
- 5) 14 agree that guidelines given are sufficient for secondary music teachers.

When asked if some areas should be improved, it suggests that teaching areas are too wide (61), and the content of the music curriculum is:

- 1) not matched to the daily living experience (44);
- 2) too difficult (43);
- 3) lacking in creativity (36);
- 4) lacking in Chinese music (33);
- 5) lacking in electronic/computerized music (28);
- 6) out-dated (22);

- 7) not successful in attracting the students' interest (18);
- 8) not able to meet students of different abilities (18);
- 9) lacking in popular music (16);
- 10) too difficult in some parts (15);
- 11) not practical (15);
- 12) lacking in supplementary teaching resources (14);
- 13) lacking in suitable supplementary activities (12);
- 14) lacking in contemporary music (11); and
- 15) lacking in referential materials (1).

(S.S.M.C., 1998: 5)

In the following section, classroom music activities at secondary schools in Hong Kong is going to be examined.

#### **3.3.8.6 Secondary School Music - Classroom Music Activities and the Scope of Learning Scope (S.S.M.C., section 3.3)**

The secondary school music teachers were asked to list the most important activities for music lessons in classrooms in their opinion. The survey found:

- 1) 1093 secondary music teachers said that listening to music is the most important music classroom activity;
- 2) 1046 said that singing was ranked as the most important activity;
- 3) 706 teachers think that third in importance is sight-reading;
- 4) 390 teachers find musical creativity activity is the fourth important activity;
- 5) 370 said that instrumental playing is the fifth item thought to be important;
- 6) 233 think that rhythmic activity is the sixth important music classroom activity; and
- 7) 13 suggested other activities.

(S.S.M.C., 1998: 5)

When asked which musical activities are thought to be difficult to teach, 734 replies were received which included: musical creativity (213); rhythmic activity (138) and

others such as sight-reading, instrument playing, listening, vocal music and sight-singing, etc. (S.S.M.C., 1998: 5). Teachers were also being asked which areas they found difficult to teach. There were 735 respondents. 220 music teachers said that Chinese traditional opera is the most difficult area to teach. The area second most commonly defined as difficult to teach is electronic / computer music (195). Others include Chinese instrumental music (82); foreign nation music (45); Western vocal music (43); Chinese folk songs / art songs (40) and Chinese music (30), etc. (S.S.M.C., 1998: 6).

In the following, in-service training for secondary school music teachers will be reviewed.

#### **3.3.8.7 In-Service Training for Secondary School Music Teachers (S.S.M.C., section 3.5)**

The responding music teachers suggested that in-service training should include:

(S.S.M.C., 1998: 6)

(Table 3.19)

In total 940 suggestions were received. The areas in which teachers most commonly felt that in-service training should be given are computer / computer music (191) and music education technology (155). Other areas include composition (100), Chinese music (80), teaching methodology (70) and chorus conducting (63).

After this exposition of the S.S.M.C. survey on about music curriculum in secondary schools in Hong Kong, the seven main points implied by the document are going to be examined.

#### **3.3.8.8 Seven Points Implied by the S.S.M.C. Document (S.S.M.C., section 4)**

There are seven main points the S.S.M.C. document suggested for improving the music curricula at secondary schools:

1. To extend the musical area – at the time of the survey Western classical music covered the major area of the secondary music curriculum. Musical teaching and learning, composition, Chinese music, world national music, and modern music education should be more emphasized.
2. To extend the categories of musical activity - singing and listening were the major activities for music lessons. Music teachers should try to explore new categories like composition and improvisation.
3. To provide in-service training on music education technology was obviously necessary.
4. To widen the boundaries of music – some areas were significantly independent from other areas in current secondary school music curriculum in Hong Kong (e.g.

Chinese and Western music, pop music and classical music). These barriers should be diminished for the advantage of students (e.g. to introduce composition, musical analysis, and knowledge of music theory). Also it was necessary to assist the teachers to link / re-link music lessons to daily life experience.

5. To design a practical music curriculum – based on the present standards of the students and teachers, to offer certain “appropriate” difficulty by the curriculum can provide a challenge to both students and teachers. The curricula contents should be empirical and practical, and should be linked between the different forms (levels) in secondary school.
6. To renew the list of technological equipment regularly – The passing on of music depends upon the function of technology at a certain degree. Thus it was necessary to improve the level of facilities provided in the classrooms, especially music playing and computer hardware. These improvements may help students to link the music lessons to their daily life experiences.
7. To provide more resources and instruments – in order to match the necessity of contemporary music education, musical instruments for students and teaching resources should be enhanced.

(S.S.M.C., 1998, section 4)

The above information derived from the document S.S.M.C. concerning form 1 to form 3 music lessons in Hong Kong is important to this research because junior forms music courses are the foundation for senior secondary school music courses. These also provide a direction for the researcher to find out what questions have not been answered yet and to form the appropriate research areas. In the following section, the S.S.M.C.’s examination of the new secondary school music courses supposed to be

introduced in 2001 will also be expounded.

### **3.3.8.9 The Proposed ‘New’ Music Syllabus (S.S.M.C., 1998, section 5)**

About the proposed new secondary school music syllabus, the S.S.M.C. reports in this way:

The Curriculum Development Council -- Secondary Music Subject Committee will discuss the ideas given by the teachers. Based on the opinion expressed by the teachers, the Committee will determine the direction of the curriculum design, the way of innovation, structure and contents. In addition, the information suggested from the questionnaires is rich in content. It is meaningful for future review and revision.

(S.S.M.C., 1998: 7, section 5)

The S.S.M.C. report states that the Secondary Music Subject Committee of the CDC will determine the direction of the new secondary music curriculum proposed to be started in 2001 after the ideas are collected from the teachers. As a result, it said that the direction of the curriculum design, the way of innovation, structure and contents will be announced. However, the proposed new music syllabus was rejected and another new syllabus – Arts Education – will be substituted for it, is going to be discussed in the next chapter.



### 3.3.9 International Prospective on Music Education and Music Curriculum

In order to investigate the area with a sense of more up-dated, deeper and global understanding, the researcher studied a number of music education journals and selected the appropriate information for studying the present international perspective of music education and curriculum at schools around the world. These are going to be described because they throw light, for other parts of the world, on issues currently being faced in Hong Kong.

- i) *British Journal of Music Education*, Cambridge University Press, vol. 9, no. 3, November 2002, “Music in the school curriculum: why bother?” by Paynter.

This article was a revised text of the Third Annual Bernarr Rainbow lecture, delivered on 17 October 2001 at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London. The main argument of this article is that the content of classroom music teaching has not done much to help the majority of people to understand music (Paynter, 2002: 215). In fact, although there is the notion of ‘education for all’ implied that school curriculum designed should be accessible to all pupils, for music, the researcher suggests that because of certain limitations such as pupils’ individual interests, abilities and attitude to musical study, this idiom gets its difficulty for development ideally at schools.

On the other hand, assessment and evaluation of music as a school subject is usually a critical issue. There is no such method which is satisfied by all the schools and music teachers. As Paynter, in this article, said that “We seem to have reached a point where we accept without question the possibility of evaluating all learning in terms which

will have the same meaning across the curriculum.” (Paynter, 2002: 216) It is impossible to educate all students to become musical or to be able to participate in music-making.

ii) *British Journal of Music Education*, Cambridge University Press, vol. 9, no. 3, November 2002, “Music for all? Pupils’ perceptions of the GCSE Music examination in one South Wales secondary school” by Wright.

The article hypothesized that, despite the egalitarian philosophy underpinning the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination system, the music course was still viewed by pupils as being elitist. Although there were some very positive comments from pupils, GCSE Music was still not the intended examination for all (Paynter, 2002: 227). The hypotheses mentioned are very similar to the situation in Hong Kong:

- 1) A considerable number of pupils are discouraged from studying GCSE Music unless they already have specialist instrumental or vocal tuition.
- 2) Pupils do not see the GCSE Music course as catering for the wide range of abilities and backgrounds for which it was intended.

It seems that music at schools will always remain a minority interest. The popular music industry remains its dominant which always represent youth culture (Paynter, 2002: 228). Music education for all seems unrealistic.

iii) *British Journal of Music Education*, BJME, Cambridge University Press, vol. 18, no. 2, July 2001: “Listening to music at home and at school” by Boal-Palheiros and Hargreaves.

This study investigated the differences between the functions of music listening at home and at school, and the potential effects of age and nationality on these differences (in U.K. and Portugal). The findings showed that music listening was an important leisure activity, especially for the older children, and that most children showed moderate positive attitudes towards school music. In short term, participants reported that home listening was linked with enjoyment, emotional mood and social relationships, whereas school music was associated with motivation for learning and being active, and particular lesson content. The report also suggest that there were few clear-cut national differences and music was generally undervalued in both countries (Boal-Palheiros & Hargreaves, 2001: 103).

iv) *International Journal of Music Education*, 1999, Conference Edition, no. 33, p. 72 -87 : “Strategies for music education in Africa: towards a meaningful progression from tradition to modern” by Nzewi (Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria)

The author states that there are three stage of music education in traditional Africa:

- 1) The first stage inducts a new-born baby into feeling the sensations of musical pulse and sound as a sympathetic participant till the age of about two years.
- 2) The second stage focuses on inculcating the sense of rhythm from the ages of

about two to eight years.

- 3) The third stage is music education for life; and starts from the age of eight, by which time gifted children could be recruited into adult groups. (Specialists emerge on such specialized aspects of musical creativity and performance as master instruments, master singing, dance, theatre.

(Nzewi, 1999:72)

About the strategies on music education, Nzewi points out that the Department of Music of the University of Nigeria has a curriculum which offers the most balanced bi-cultural music education program (i.e. African and Western) that traditional master musicians formally recruited on the staff, to give consistent and systematic instruction, with the collaboration of theoretically competent, music-literate staff, on indigenous music instruments (Nzewi, 1999:78).

Similar to Hong Kong, both local and Western music are taught at schools in Nigeria. In a sense, also face a collaboration of different music cultures. Nzewi concludes that the current concern for modern music education in Africa is pursuing the appropriate strategies and ennobling cultural / creative imperatives which combine of four directions: continuum in theory, creativity, education and performance (Nzewi, 1999:86).

- v) *International Journal of Music Education*, 1999, Conference Edition, no. 33, p.88 – 93: Learning together through research method” by Tafuri (Conservatoire of Bologna, Italy)

The author said that the general aims of music education should be identified on the basis of the most fundamental needs – for music teachers and students (Tafari, 1999: 90). The research method should:

...promote cooperation, solidarity, mutual help, the cultural initiative, helps to learn in groups producing more stable learning, communicates a spirit of research that lets everyone participate in the production of knowledge in a critical and aware manner...

(Tafari, 1999: 92)

It is understood that research instruments should be useful in order to help the teachers and students obtaining the best advices in order to maintain and development music as a cultural subject at schools.

vi) *International Journal of Music Education*, 1998, no. 32, “ In Music Education – a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend – Is this a Problem?” by Walker (University of New South Wales)

Usually music is intrinsic to some cultural systems. But in modern Western culture it may be important to citizens’ daily lives as Walker observed: “as witnessed by the inordinate amount of money spent on receiving music in the various electronic media, it has little or no function in what people do to keep alive. (Walker, 1998: 55)

To compare the value of music in general public in different areas, Walker found that:

1) Stock-brokers or bankers in Paris, London, Singapore, and Tokyo use music as a

means of relaxing from the pressures of their work, not as an integral part of it. However,

- 2) The people of Bali regard their traditional music as crucial and essential to their daily lives in all its aspects.

The reason for the different is that not only because the gamelan is so integral to Bali's Hindu ceremonial and spiritual activities, but because the special sounds of the gamelan are regarded as personal, part of their essence, and something as necessary to their lives as the blood in their veins (Walker 1998: 55).

Unavoidably, value of music seems to be differentiate at certain degrees at different countries as the author examined.

vii) *International Journal of Music Education*, 1998, no. 32, "Some Thoughts on Music Education in Global Culture" by Mertz (New Mexico Highlands University)

What exactly is the nature of music education in a global culture? The authors suggest that the discussion usually revolves around pedagogical issues concerning the roles of teachers and students in the study of music. The primary responsibility of the teachers is guiding students through a course of study which is not content-prescriptive but "requires that both the student and the teacher determine appropriate musical events for study" (Mertz, 1998: 76).

In short, a good music curriculum should be good and fit the students' general

abilities while music teachers as a satisfied interpreter of the subject.

Other relevant information drawn from journal articles about music teachers will be presented in the next chapter, section 4.3.3 “International perspective on the role of music teachers”.

### **3.4 Summary of this Chapter**

This chapter has examined the secondary school music education and music curriculum in Hong Kong. The S.S.M.C. report provides especially useful and supportive back up to avoid any double work. In addition, the foregoing review of literature provides a rationale for a number of hypotheses (section 5.5) to be tested in this research. As was said at the beginning of this chapter, the salient points are: firstly, to define the term “music education” and relevant component elements of present Hong Kong secondary school music curriculum (in section 3.1); secondly, to examine the way in which music is covered and operating in the curriculum in different cultural environments (compare to England and Wales and Singapore (section 3.2); and thirdly, to study the significant studies in the field (in section 3.3). The information and findings collected from the literature review will be tested in the fieldwork in chapter 6 (i.e. questionnaires, interviews and classroom visits).

Some issues raised by this research will be scrutinized in the following chapter. The eleven issues listed in section 4.4.1 will be tested afterwards and the findings will be presented in the conclusion. Up to this point, based on the information found, it is obvious that one of the main issues for this research is that the secondary school

music teacher has the key role for a successful revolution in Hong Kong secondary school music education. A brief study in this area is going to be discussed below in section 4.3 – the changing role of secondary school music teachers in Hong Kong.



## **Chapter 4: The Concept of Arts Education as Opposed to the Study of Music as a Separate Subject**

### Introduction

Some initial issues have been stated in chapter 1 about the purpose of this research, for example, why this research area has been chosen (sections 1.1 to 1.2) and what data it is necessary to collect (sections 1.3 to 1.5). Chapters 2 and 3 provide background readings concerning the essential elements of present secondary school music education in Hong Kong. To continue, this chapter tries to explore the concept of Arts Education as opposed to music studied as an individual subject.

An unexpected variable appeared when the researcher commenced this chapter in February 2000, when the proposed new 2001 HKCEE and HKALE syllabi showed that there would be no change for music examinations. It remained the same though there was heated discussion, and some preparatory work was done and a consultation document leading to anticipated changes was issued (newspaper cutting, Appendix III). In addition a relevant official document S.S.M.C. was promulgated by the CDC in October 1998 (section 3.3.7 and Appendix VI). Instead of this, a new curriculum called “Arts Education” which combines music, drama, visual arts and dance was to be introduced (Arts candidate numbers had been compared to music candidate numbers in section 1.1). As this was a new concept to be developed in Hong Kong secondary schools, the policy of Arts Education will become an important factor for study. In the following section, a relevant article about Arts Education policy in New York as a reference will be examined first.

#### **4.1 Policy and the Nature of Music Study: the Journal *Arts Education Policy Review*, (A.E.P.R.) July / August 2002 (New York)**

Because the coming new syllabus of Arts Education was under consultation, the researcher studied a number of related resources from overseas in order to find out certain useful resources for background.

A relevant article *Policy Frameworks, Research, and K – 12 Schooling* was written by Hope. The aim of this article was to explore potential and future relationships among music education policy frameworks and its supreme goal with suggestions for future policy research. Hope suggested that a policy framework is “a constellation of such forces and resources moving together or in parallel to fulfill a common purpose” (Hope, 2002: 11). Hope thought about music education: “It is possible to build huge conceptual and operational systems associated with music education and, in the process, lose sight of the fundamental goal: providing individual students with the opportunity to gain musical knowledge and skills.” (Hope, 2002: 11)

Although the aim of music education is to provide an opportunity to all students to learn about music, it really depends upon government policy. Hope suggested that policy is “a decision about how to proceed, based in part on knowledge or research and in part on values and opinion. Its existence presupposes potential action aligned with the decision reached. Policy is made because of a perceived need to act” (Hope, 2002: 11). Nonetheless, music education in the schools is “caught up in an interlocking web of policies and policy making at all levels” (Hope, 2002: 11). Hope raises the following questions:

1. What are the roles of value and principle, information and analysis, financial interest and political will, cultural missions and spiritual responsibility?
2. How do the answers to these questions affect decision-making for music education?

Hope suggests that questions of change and evolution lead us directly to government and governmental policies. The governmental structure affecting music education programs in the schools is clear (Hope, 2002: 12). However, “there are tremendous arguments over curricular content, teaching methods, and ways to gain public support. Policy frameworks and their influences constitute one of the less studied subjects in music education research.” (Hope, 2002: 13) However, each policy framework shares structures and complexities with all the others within a given society and almost every policy framework takes decisions that reinforce science and math as the most important ways of knowing and doing (Hope, 2002: 14). Thus research and efforts being put into music education should be respected for their good reason of beneficial development. Hope concludes: “If expertise is not respected, then understanding of the field is diminished because expert opinion is not heard and valued. Then anyone can decide what music education is and should be.” (Hope, 2002: 14)

In the sense that understanding, values, investments, research and evaluation are important for promoting the subject, care should be taken during the process: “Music education will pay a great price for strategic failures where the simple is made too complex, or the complex made too simple” (Hope, 2002: 14).

On the other hand, it is understandable that values influence music education policy, whereas, youth culture is the foundation for this belief – young people love fun,

sensation, the simple, and the new; they change constantly, fast and easily; and they are essentially about “me” (Hope, 2002: 15). Hope asks: “How should educators deal with the contrast between the messages regularly delivered in our culture and the nature of music study?” (Hope, 2002: 16). Music education is conducted in an arena that is full of policy and propaganda techniques and in this arena, the term arts education has been so broadened that it no longer denotes serious, sequential study exclusively. Furthermore such policy and propaganda techniques are even more apparent in the large national discussion on education now flying under flag of education reform (Hope, 2002: 16). Nevertheless, ‘reform’ always has its problem because reform has become permanent and thus oxymoronic. It constantly devalues the role of professional expertise by creating impressions that teachers and administrators are to blame for everything. (Hope, 2002: 16)

Hope also suggests that success depends on knowing and understanding where danger really lies and this is the function of “intelligent services of all kinds, including the efforts of policy analysts working to support music education. When effective, analysis is able to separate the irritating from the truly threatening. It is able to forewarn -wisdom begins with a clear understanding of the facts” (Hope, 2002: 16). Hope also mentions the role of the music teacher. The fundamental goal of most music teachers should be to give students a rich gift: a body of knowledge and skills that can be the basis of lifelong engagement. Music teachers introduce their students to a world of artistic action, great achievement, and civilizing power (Hope, 2002: 16-17). In short, music education is about giving students power in a discipline (Hope, 2002: 18). This study can be compared with section 2.5.4, the Effects of Musical Nurture on Personal Disposition, Morality and Virtues.

#### **4.2 The New Proposed “Arts Education” for HKCEE / HKALE Students Starting in 2005 – Consultation Document “*Learning to Learn – Key Learning Area: Arts Education*”**

The consultation document *Learning to Learn* was published by the CDC in November 2000:

The *Learning to Learn* document is the outcome of the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage of the Holistic Review of the School Curriculum conducted by CDC beginning in 1999, which is done in parallel with the Education Commission’s Education System Review. In the review exercise, arts education is regarded as an essential domain / key learning area to provide whole-person development for students.

(*Learning to Learn*: 2000: 1)

The problems of arts education at present in Hong Kong are said to be:

1. In the past, the society did not sufficiently value arts education. The arts were not accorded great importance and the learning of the arts was mainly taken up as a pastime;
2. The role of arts education in school was considered as a compensatory measure to balance students’ cognitive growth through studying academic subjects;
3. The existing arts curriculum is ill-adapted to the new needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, i.e. limited exposure to different art forms, skill-based curriculum, insufficient emphasis on the development of creativity and aesthetic appreciation, etc.; and
4. Community resources are not fully utilized for the development of arts education.

(*Learning to Learn*: 2000: 2)

[Relevant references in part (C) questions 5 and 6 on the questionnaires for secondary school principals, music teachers, HKCEE / HKALE music students are related to this area of Arts Education being introduced in 2005: sections 6.2, 6.3, 6.6 and 6.7]

It is believed that one of the most effective ways to develop students’ whole persons is through Arts Education. However, how to maintain a balanced curriculum is a

long-term struggle for the present examination-oriented education system in Hong Kong. As the document suggests:

There are undeniably certain barriers to the development of quality arts education. At present, the examination-oriented culture, which results in a stronger emphasis on academic subjects, the deficiency in the number of teachers trained in arts subjects, and the over-emphasis on skills acquisition in the teaching of the arts have all hampered the development of quality arts education.

*(Learning to Learn: 2000: 4)*

In order to achieve the goal of effective Arts Education, the CDC proposed three stages of development: short-term (2000-2005); medium-term (2005-2010); and long-term (2010+). These are going to be presented in the following briefly (*Learning to Learn: 2000: 6-8*).

#### Short-term (2000-2005)

The objectives in the short-term are:

1. To provide at least nine years of basic education in both music and visual arts as the basis of the arts curriculum. About 10-15% and 7.5 – 10% of learning time should be allocated at primary and junior secondary levels respectively;
2. To allocate learning time at the senior secondary level for arts education;
3. To introduce drama and / or other art forms into the curriculum. Schools may devise a 5-year strategy so as to provide opportunities for more exposure to arts experiences for students in the formal and / or informal curriculum;
4. To prepare arts teachers for their changing roles, such as enabling them to:
  - a) be competent in designing school-based curriculum;
  - b) facilitate living learning in the arts; i.e. organizing Artists-in-Schools

programs, attending concerts and visiting to galleries, museums and exhibitions;

c) teach how to learn and be a life-long learner; and

d) be equipped with various necessary skills for quality teaching in arts education, e.g. IT skills.

#### Medium-term (2005-2010)

The objectives in the medium-term are:

1. To provide at least 5% of learning time for students at the senior secondary level. It is proposed to provide senior secondary students with essential learning experience in one or two examinable or non-examinable subjects in arts education, and to ensure that students have the opportunity to learn through life-long learning;
2. To develop references and exemplar materials for assessments in the arts; and
3. To develop linkages in teaching and learning within the arts and across the whole curriculum.

#### Long-term (2010+)

The objectives in the long-term are:

1. To allow greater autonomy for schools fully to develop their own school-based arts curriculum and assessments; and
2. To provide more space for the emergence of new art forms and allow opportunities for students to choose and pursue their preferences in the arts.

The proposed four learning targets in Arts Education are to develop students' abilities of creativity and imagination; to develop skills and processes; to cultivate critical responses; and to put the arts in context:

(*Learning to Learn*: 2000: 10) (Figure 4.1)

The above chart shows the cultural dimensions of the arts and their contributions to human lives and society at large. Furthermore, the following conceptual framework is intended to provide a platform for different forms of the arts to be included in the school curriculum:



KLAs = Key Learning Areas

(*Learning to Learn*: 2000: 10)

(Figure 4.2)

It is understood that different schools have different priorities in the provision of arts education in their school curriculum. The document provides certain advice on the topic of Arts Education. For example, the following suggestion is for senior secondary level (i.e. forms 4 to 7) – titled *Curriculum Development for Different Stages of Schooling for Arts Education*:

(*Learning to Learn*: 2000: 24)

(Table 4.3)

Appendix 2 of the document (*Learning to Learn*: p. 26-29) in the document is titled *Learning Objectives Leading to the Four Learning Targets (Music, Visual Arts & Drama)*. The following suggestion is specifically designed for music (Note: Key stage 1 = primary one to three; Key stage 2 = primary four to six; Key stage 3 = secondary one to three; Key stage 4 = secondary four to seven):

## **Learning Objectives Specific for Designed for Music**

(Table 4.4)

The consultation document shows that the CDC has done wide research in the field of Arts Education. However, the present researcher wonders if its expectations can be realized in the future, as they seem too idealistic to a certain degree. Also, limitation is always there in imposing a new curriculum, especially in Arts Education as it involves individual abilities and aptitude. In the following section is one of the main important studies for this research -- Arts Education proposed in Brazil as a case study.

#### **4.2.1 Learning from the Arts Education introduced in Brazil in 1971: the Context of Music Education**

In Brazil in 1971, music classes were replaced by arts education under the philosophy of ‘integrated arts’ (Hentschke & Oliveira, 1999: 14). In the following, after a brief discussion of what happened in Brazil, a prospective study and suggestions on the proposed introduction of Arts Education introducing in Hong Kong in 2005 will follow.

In Brazil, music education is neither compulsory nor stated in government guidelines in primary and secondary school education. It is a separate curriculum subject. The survey states that “After the compulsory Orpheonic Singing movement developed by Heitor Villa-Lobos during the 30s and 40s, music education practices became involved with the arts education movement” (Hentschke & Oliveira, 1999: 14). Starting in 1971, arts education has been introduced in Brazil which include music, drama, visual arts and dance (Hentschke & Oliveira, 1999: 15). The contents are exactly the same as those which Hong Kong is intending to include in its syllabus. Nevertheless, the survey points out six major issues on Arts Education in Brazil:

- 1) Although there were some guidelines, one could not find a real system working.
- 2) Although there was a legal requirement for the three art forms to be taught (i.e. music, drama, visual arts and dance) in primary education, there was a complete decline in music teaching, as well as an inefficient teaching of the other art forms.
- 3) The situation deteriorated during these years (three decades) to a point that nowadays only a few schools, most of them private, offer music education as a separate subject, or offer some extra-curricular activities such as choirs or instrumental groups.
- 4) In the last decade (during the 90s) there has been a growing concern among music professionals to bring back general music education as an independent subject to schools.
- 5) Recently the educational guidelines for all subjects (in Brazil) were developed as a consequence of the new Educational Law – LDB (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educacao*, December, 1996). This law allows some curricular flexibility for the teaching of each art form, although it uses the general term ‘art’ (the document states that, “arts education will be a compulsory curricular subject in all levels of basic education, in order to promote the cultural development of the students” [LDB, 1996, Art. 26, *Paragrafo Segundo*]).
- 6) And finally, as a consequence the Brazil government guidelines established that each art form (i.e. music, drama, visual arts and dance) should be taught in primary schools but each school can choose which ones they will offer and who should teach them.

(Hentschke & Oliveira, 1999: 14-15)

The survey concludes the situations with six points:

- 1) In general terms, music education practices reflect the instability generated at government levels.
- 2) Music teachers lack confidence in their training.
- 3) There is a general belief that music in schools should only serve to support other subjects, or to make students happier, healthier, better, or even only to fill in free time (Hentschke, Oliveira and Souza, 1999).
- 4) Informal music practices are very much alive in Brazil. For example, around two hundred popular music bands are listed in the city of Salvador alone and a large number of Brazilian popular musicians are developing successful careers.
- 5) The fact mentioned in the above point 4 influences many young people (in Brazil) to think more seriously about music as a professional career. Despite this, Brazilian music education in schools does not yet include music education structures, experiences and incentives of an informal nature.
- 6) There is still a big gap between formal and informal music practices in Brazil.

(Hentschke & Oliveira, 1999: 15)

The characteristics of points 2, 3, 4 and 6 above also exist in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, as has been mentioned before, the new Arts Education being suggested as a substitute for the present secondary school music curriculum in Hong Kong starting in 2005 is not a new idea. Arts Education has been in force in Brazil since 1971 but is said to be a failure – the role of music as a school subject is even more neglected (Hentschke & Oliveira, 1999: 15). It is to be wondered whether the change will be a good idea or not. This will be further examined in the next section.

#### **4.2.2 Prospective Suggestions for Arts Education in Hong Kong: based on a U.K. Research Report on Arts Education in Secondary School**

After the study of the relevant information above and the failure experienced in Brazil, there is reason to fear that a similar outcome may occur in Hong Kong. Music education will probably further lose its importance in the school curriculum and reach the end of the road in its future development. As has been explored above, Arts Education has been implemented in Brazil for thirty years. However, at present, there are voices among music professionals to bring back general music as a separate subject to schools (section 4.2.1, point 4). For this reason, the present researcher wonders if the introduction of the new Arts Education would be a success in Hong Kong. On the other hand, she will try to find out if there is any successful example opposite to that of Brazil (i.e. a successful music curriculum implemented under the ‘umbrella’ of Arts Education). This requires the examination of:

- 1) The intrinsic and immediate effects to music curriculum under the umbrella of Arts Education.

- 2) The general art-form knowledge and skills required in the new syllabus for music.
- 3) The overall perspectives of Arts Education starting in 2005 in Hong Kong.

A 602 page research report edited by the U.K. National Foundation for Educational Research is useful for this research: On the last page it states that:

This research report presents the results of a detailed and rigorous examination of the effects and effectiveness of secondary school arts education in England and Wales. The three-year study included questionnaires to over 2000 Year 11 pupils; an interview program with employers and employees; and in-depth interviews with pupils, arts teachers, senior school managers, as well as observation of arts lessons at five case-study schools.

*(Arts Education in Secondary Schools, 2000: back cover)*

Arts Education for the purposes of this research report included Art, Music, Drama, Dance, Expressive arts and other arts. The researcher concentrated on the area relevant to the report - music in secondary schools in U.K. and Wales. Disappointingly, it reports that: “One finding raises especial concern. In many of the schools, music seems particularly problematic, regarded by pupils as increasingly exclusive and less engaging as they progress towards key stage 4 and the GCSE.” (*Arts Education in Secondary Schools, 2000: iii*)

Furthermore, the report remarks “...music, with only four per cent [of pupil respondents] nominating it, was the lowest of all the National Curriculum foundation subjects” (*Arts Education in Secondary Schools, 2000: 524*). On the other hand, music is treated as a valuable activity as an extra-curricular subject: “For both primary and secondary ages, music had the highest proportion of pupils

participating a great deal in extra-curricular activities” (*Arts Education in Secondary Schools*, 2000: 549). In comparison with the survey in Brazil and the report in U.K. and Wales, similar findings are that:

- 1) Music as a school subject at secondary schools attracts few student to take it academically and seriously.
- 2) Music as a part of Arts Education results in a comparatively highly neglected status.
- 3) Development of music in Arts Education is very difficult.

Based on the above information, students tend to take music as an extra-curricular activity rather than an academic subject at school. Although arts activities make a valued contribution to a school’s public image and Arts Education is thought to be a good idea for developing students’ potential and abilities in arts, music, being only one part of Arts Education, would be treated less importantly than it would be as an independent subject at school. Thus the concern for music development on a school basis is unavoidably hotly debated amongst professionals in music education: some may support the idea that music should be an independent school subject to guarantee its development in schools, especially for the nine years of free compulsory education in Hong Kong. On the other hand, the support for music varies from school to school. See, for example, the related discussion in section 3.1 (the content of music curriculum is usually general and wide); section 3.3.6 (constraints for its development); section 4.3 (knowledge and skill requirements for school music teachers are wide but supports for them is usually limited) and chapter 6 (data and feedback from the research).



### **4.3 The Changing Role of Secondary School Music Teachers in Hong Kong**

Education Commission Report number 1 (section 2.3.1) disclosed some limitations in the scheme of promoting teachers and recognition of the qualifications of teachers. This section focuses on the issues faced by secondary school music teachers in Hong Kong.

Stenhouse (1967: 64, 68) points out that a teacher's role in the classroom lies in contact with students, while classroom culture is a selective reflection of the culture of society and the formal expression of the selective culture of the classroom is the curriculum. As a result, the teacher's becomes the key role in the implementation and development of the selected curriculum. Dewey wrote:

The only way to increase the learning of pupils is to augment the quantity and quality of real teaching. Since learning is something that the pupil has to do himself and for himself, the initiative lies with the learner. The teacher is a guide and director; he steers the boat, but the energy that propels it must come from those who are learning. The more a teacher is aware of the past experiences of students, of their hopes, desires, chief interests, the better will be understood the forces at work that need to be directed and utilized for the formation of reflective habits.

(Dewey, cited in Noddings, 1995: 47)

Dewey points out that teaching should induce learning although it should not cause every student to learn some piece of information or skill predetermined by the teacher. The main point Dewey addresses is that teachers should make students aware of various possibilities - possibilities in the domain of ends or learning objectives and possibilities among means for achieving their ends (Noddings, 1995: 47). Furthermore, Dewey stresses that if reasonableness were construed in a certain way, the end result

would have to be the learning aimed at, and one would have to abandon the standard thesis and agree that teaching does, after all, imply learning. In other words, “this way of construing reasonableness puts great responsibility on the teacher” (Noddings, 1995: 49) and “teaching means causing to learn” (Hughes and Hughes, 1946: 319).

On the other hand, as previously noted in chapter 2, education in Hong Kong is an example of a “centre-periphery” model -the instructions are mainly given by the officials of the advisory inspectorate and the Hong Kong Examination and Assessment Authority. Although school teachers are the major interpreters of the curriculum, they are not involved in initiating policy. Instead, in order to ensure that teachers deliver the content of the recommended curricula, three procedures are enforced. Firstly, teachers are required to follow the examination syllabi and teach. Secondly, a number of provisions are set up in the Education Act. Thirdly, inspections are arranged by the school inspectorates to ensure teaching quality. Paynter asked: “Should the teacher be seen as ... the channel through which received traditions and techniques are passed on; as the arbiter of standards?” (Paynter, 1982: 30) On the other hand, Brace points out that “The greatest job-satisfaction for any teacher is to know that nothing is preventing him from doing what he knows he is capable of for his students” (Brace, 1970: 36).

Nevertheless, in Hong Kong, there is a lack of professional training for school music teachers. Wong’s study (1990) suggested that secondary school teachers generally did not have a strong preparation for teaching music. In Hong Kong, generally secondary music teachers are full-time teachers who have to teach music and other subjects at schools. Thus they cannot teach in more than one school at the same time. However,

there is still both a shortage of music teachers and the number of periods devoted to music at schools has declined as new subjects have been added to the timetable (especially Putonghua and Computer Studies, Ng and Morris, 1998: 49-51). In the study by Ng and Morris, some interesting responses may reflect the difficulties of Hong Kong secondary school music teachers at present:

- “I have to repeat one thing six times in each form...My discomfort solely relates to the bored feeling inside me.”
- “If I want to teach singing in class, I have to lower my expectation. If they are willing to just open their mouth, I wouldn’t ask for more...”
- “...they themselves (the students) don’t have the initiative to learn.”
- “...learning a musical instrument needs persistence. They just don’t have that.”

(Ng and Morris, 1998: 50-53)

Similar findings to those in this research are in section 6.3 of the present thesis. Meanwhile, to maintain a good class discipline is noted as a heavy burden on the music teachers –some singing and instrumental playing, especially, will lead to laughter in the class. Consequently, watching music videos and doing worksheets become common activities in the music classrooms. Ng and Morris said that: “Whilst teachers of academic subjects stress the effectiveness of transmission teaching styles for covering the syllabus and preparing students for the examination, music teachers stress its efficiency for maintaining classroom discipline.” (Ng and Morris, 1998: 48) Bessom, Tatarunis and Forcucci (1980: 8) also suggested that a teacher is concerned with a number of difficult tasks which include, for example, developing goals for students, motivating the students to learn, selecting and presentation of teaching material, maintaining effective classroom control and evaluation, etc. Facing the new

era with its rapid development of music technology: “Musician-educators for the twenty-first century will need to be excellent musicians and effective teachers” (Dobbs, 1990: 295).

In the following, requirements for HKCEE and HKALE music teachers in Hong Kong are going to be discussed.

#### **4.3.1 Required Knowledge for the HKCEE / HKALE Music Teachers**

The introduction to the HKCEE music syllabus states that the aim of this syllabus is: “...to encourage [in students] the habit of listening intelligently to music, to develop music literacy and to have a general understanding of Western and Chinese music culture. All candidates will be expected to have some basic familiarity with both Western and Chinese music.” (Appendix IV, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph).

This reflects that teachers should have the knowledge of practical skill, listening skill, theory and history of music (which includes orchestral instruments, Western music, Chinese music, and contemporary music, etc.) (appendix IV). In addition, the introduction of the HKALE music syllabus states that: “This syllabus is intended for students who wish to achieve a general qualification in music... all candidates are encouraged to develop an elementary knowledge of both [Western and Chinese] music traditions, ... intelligent listening to music, and musical literacy...” (appendix IV) These include aural training; knowledge of a range of musical activities; Western music techniques; Western music history and Chinese music knowledge; Chinese music history; the ability to evaluate students’ performance technique in playing

Western instruments and Chinese instruments; the ability to evaluate students' ability in composition; the ability to supervise students to do special projects on electronic music, arrangement, choral training, accompanying, improvisation, jazz techniques and conducting; and the ability to supervise the students to finish an extended essay up to 5,000 words. (Appendix IV)

It can be seen that the contents of HKCEE and HKALE music examinations are very broad in content (section 3.1.2). Teachers need comparatively huge support and resources (section 4.3). One of the main supports comes from the school principals. This is going to be discussed next.

#### **4.3.2 The Importance of School Principals' Support for School Music Teachers**

Secondary school music teachers, generally, may appear to doubt the value of their work in the classroom. The leadership and administrative style of the school principals is crucial because this can give the school an outstanding and distinctive character. Usually, effective leadership will result in a higher achievement of efficiency as well as good management of the school. For music education, if the principal thinks that music education is important and should be encouraged, it usually results in a comparatively higher level of achievement in the subject. Nevertheless, this may depend on a recognized, worthwhile and purposeful music curriculum:

One of the most urgent tasks for teachers of music, especially those teaching music in schools, is to find some kind of basis on which to build a worthwhile and purposeful musical curriculum. Lack[ing] this purpose,...[music will become]

an aimless and rather arbitrary subject which varies enormously from school to school and teacher to teacher.

(Swanwick & Taylor, 1982: 5)

For the proposed Arts Education syllabus, secondary schools music teachers' role probably will become more problematic because the importance of music will unavoidably decrease within the wide area of the curriculum.

### **4.3.3 A Critical Approach to Integrated Curricula: with Some points of Dispute**

Based on the studies mentioned above in this chapter, it is undoubted that a successful selective music curricula requires a thoughtful consideration of teaching strategies. Teachers are the persons to decide the relevant teaching priorities in the classroom. Furthermore, a successful music program depends on the teacher's knowledge and experience as well.

However, music is usually seen as having a lower status than the more important core subjects of Chinese, English, Mathematics, and so on. The tension exists in school music education regardless of the abilities of the students. Also comparatively smaller number of students learning music outside schools implies that fewer students make ideal progress during the lessons and a larger portion of students find the lesson too difficult or boring. The disputes arise as:

- i) not all students are musically trained;

- ii) class activities should be designed appropriate for the age range and attention span of students.

Ideally speaking, music in secondary schools should be taught by classroom teachers, specialists and artists. Thus a promising standard can hopefully set across art forms with expectation for:

- 1) creating, performing , and participation;
- 2) understanding and utilizing resources and materials and learning the skills and techniques associated with the art form;
- 3) analyzing and responding to works of art – a place where the generalist teachers play a central role; and
- 4) understanding the cultural and aesthetic dimensions of art in historical and contemporary terms.

(Upitis, 2001:53)

Undoubtedly, music genre is a latent cultural heritage. Some musical genres receive respect from local and foreign countries, like Hong Kong. However, a socio-musical system may work favorably for other genres. Thus, it could be said that if a genre has no effective way of teaching, it may disappear. For music to survive as a secondary school subject in Hong Kong, the researcher suggests that the most important thing we can do from an educational point of view is to revise the educational guidelines. These may include the goals and intentions of music teaching, the music teacher's role, music learning and the development of music knowledge, humans, society and music, creative processes, musicality, the music interest of children and young people,

the multicultural society, and young people and the media (Stahammar, 2000: 36).

Although the points of view expressed by the authors being studied in this research are similar and mostly agreeable, the researcher finds that one of the outstanding disputes in the field is “creativity” in music education. Generally speaking, creativity should be positively encouraged. However, investigating the practical circumstances in Hong Kong, it is difficult to require the students to develop well in musical creativity. Even the teachers usually find that to keep the class in silence (i.e. sit and listen) is already a hard job for them.

Traditionally, creative activities have not been a core activity in the music curriculum of Hong Kong schools. Meanwhile, Hong Kong music teaching tends to be overly teacher-directed and focused on music reading, class singing, and music appreciation. Opportunities for students to create their own music are rare (Leung & McPherson, 2002: 67). The situation is a result of:

- 1) a lack of suitable equipment for group activities, especially practical activities that may involve small groups of students working on performances or compositions.
- 2) lack of space and large class numbers (around 40 students)'
- 3) teachers seem reluctant to employ creative music-making activities because of a lack of training in the area;
- 4) there is a general tendency to rely on methods of whole class teaching that they believe are needed to maintain students' attention and discipline.

(Leung & McPherson, 2002: 67)



#### **4.4 Summary of this Chapter – Issues and Objectives Raised from this Research**

Based on the 1998 S.S.M.C. document (section 3.3.8), the unchanged 2001 HKCEE /HKALE music syllabi, the new Arts Education starting in 2005, as well as the relevant surveys found and mentioned above (especially the introduction of Arts Education in Brazil, section 4.2.1 and the research report on Arts Education in the U.K., section 4.2.2), eleven issues for this research are established as follows:

##### **4.4.1 Eleven Issues Suggested for this Research**

Questions on the questionnaires for secondary school principals, music teachers, HKCEE/HKALE music students, and questions for interviews and classroom observation are designed under the ‘umbrella’ of the following issues (sections 6.2 to 6.7):

- 1) Why has secondary school music education in Hong Kong not been emphasized?
- 2) Why are there so few candidates taking HKCEE/HKALE music examinations?
- 3) Why is taking the HKCEE/HKALE music examination important?
- 4) Why is this research important?
- 5) Who are the professionals in music education in Hong Kong?
- 6) There is a circle: no candidates, no teachers. Then where are the HKCEE/HKALE music teachers to come from?
- 7) In order to teach music at secondary school, are HKALE music results important for students to study music courses in universities in Hong Kong?
- 8) How should the government promote the secondary music syllabus / Arts Education and convince pupils to take music in secondary school?
- 9) A “new” music syllabus was expected in 2001. Why has it not changed?

10) Is the new Arts Education to be introduced for HKCEE/HKALE levels in 2005 a positive one?

11) Is it a necessity to improve teacher training in order to meet the above issues?

These issues are important to this research because they may influence the formation of its hypothesis, determine the methodologies to be used (chapter 5), may affect the necessary data for analysis (chapter 6), influence the potential results of the collected data (chapter 6), and also may advise some suggestions for a restructured music syllabus (section 8.2). Based on these eleven questions, the five objectives of this research are as follows:

#### **4.4.2 Five Objectives of this Research**

- 1) to find out how education policy can affect secondary school music education in Hong Kong (chapter 2);
- 2) to identify the roles of policy makers, school principals, school music teachers, parents and students in the development of secondary music education (chapter 6);
- 3) to examine if tertiary music courses and secondary school music courses are linked in Hong Kong (section 2.5.5 and chapter 6);
- 4) to find out the influence of music syllabi (i.e. design and content) on the subject's development (chapter 6); and
- 5) to make recommendations for the coming Arts Education in Hong Kong, specifically for music (section 4.2 and chapter 6).

## **Chapter 5: Methodology and Research Design**

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodology used and hypotheses adopted to achieve the aims and objectives of the research. This explanation is followed by a brief restatement of its aims of this research (section 5.1); outlines of the research methodology, research instruments and approaches of analysis (sections 5.2 to 5.4) with the methods of analysis being adopted and rejected. The hypotheses, pilot study and sample size are introduced in sections 5.5 and 5.6; the validity and reliability of this research are explained in section 5.6. A summary of this chapter is presented in the final section.

In order to carry out this research, the writer has sought to ensure that the research contains the following recommended characteristics:

1. A clear problem set in a scientific context.
2. A clearly explained and appropriate methodology.
3. Adequate and appropriate data and data analysis.
4. Clear separation of results and interpretation.
5. Sensible and penetrating discussion.
6. Logical and relevant conclusions.
7. Intellectual achievement and originality.
8. A high standard of presentation and easy to follow.

(Parsons and Knight, 2001: 141)

Emphasis is also laid upon clarity of description, logic of discussion, and coherent arguments.

## **5.1 Aims of the Study**

As was stated in section 1.3, the aim of this research is to study the development of Hong Kong secondary music education in the period of 1998 to 2009. The new music curriculum, supposed to start in 2001, was rejected. Another was proposed for 2005 in Arts Education but that was also dropped. For this reason, the aim of this piece of research has been enlarged to a certain degree.

## **5.2 Research Methodology: Aim at a True Measure**

Research is a search for truth. Thus a correct research method is important which describes the steps followed in conducting the study and the materials used at each step (Weissberg & Buker, 1990: 90). As a result, the choice of methodology can influence writing style and form. However, there is no single blueprint for planning research because “research design is governed by the notion of fitness for purpose. The purposes of the research determine the methodology and design of the research” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001: 73). Research methodologies should be fit for the research purpose and are adopted to identify a set of issues that the researcher is addressing. Van Dalen (1979) writes: “One method is not suitable for all circumstances, each situation demands an appropriate method, or the use of several methods in the solving of problems. Therefore, it is imperative that a researcher be familiar with several methods and instruments of data collection” (quoted by Al-Nabhani, 1996: 121).

In addition, a necessary step in a research project is to organize and discover the old and new knowledge on a specific topic by a chosen methodology. The research issue

should be a real and practical one, not imaginary. The information found is used for developing understanding and the research process is from the general to the particular. As a result, the theories are derived from the data collected.

In this research, a quantitative approach was employed as the main approach, while a simple qualitative approach was employed to complement in the following section, the characteristics of certain research methods will be introduced and the reasons for choosing the methods and instruments of data collection for this thesis will be explained.

### **5.2.1 Quantitative Research**

Quantitative research consists of those studies in which the data concerned can be analyzed in terms of numbers, i.e. quantitative data are numerical, in the form of numbers. It is a scientific investigation which includes the process of gathering data, the design of the study, questions, hypotheses, and drawing forth the significance of the results, theory and point of view. Sometimes, statistical processing will be needed. This will depend on the sort of data to be processed, such as nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio. Glass and Hopkins remark: “The study of statistics not only will improve your ability to read and evaluate research literature but should help you become a more informed citizen and consumer by being better equipped to evaluate data and other quantitative evidence used to support claims, conclusions, and points of view.” (Glass & Hopkins, 1984: 4)

### **5.2.2 Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is generally language-intensive. Language provides a method for understanding cultures and the viewpoints of the participants. People are the primary data-gathering instrument in qualitative research and qualitative data are empirical data in words. The researcher has to present and interpret the data analysis in a direct and concise way. Bias should be avoided. The write-up takes different formats depending on the purpose of the study and the targeted audience. Thus qualitative research is primarily viewed as an inquiry process based on building a holistic, complex understanding of a social problem such as education.

Usually, qualitative researchers assume reality is socially constructed and that variables are complex, interwoven, and difficult to measure. The researcher is usually personally involved in the researching process, often from an insider's point of view.

In carrying out qualitative research, the researcher acts as a key instrument. The researcher should not only write down the notes, but also pay attention to the scenario, the respondent's gestures, feelings, sense and signals. Data are analyzed in an inductive way and specific outcomes may arise. Usually, the information collected is a source for understanding the viewpoints of the participants and the complexity of cultures. Thus the researcher should interpret the insights such as behavioural implications, refine knowledge and information, and identify problems. For this reason, as the researching instrument, the researcher should possess self-awareness and powers of self-observation.

To compare the two principal forms: qualitative research is more about the nature of

the study while quantitative research is described in numbers. Both types of research are valid and useful, and it is possible for a single study to use both methods. Here is a simple comparison between these two types of research:

<b>Qualitative approaches</b>	<b>Quantitative approaches</b>
words	numbers
open-ended, responsive	predetermined, given
capturing uniqueness	measuring
long-term	short-term
continuous	intermittent
capturing particularity	comparing
valuing quality	correlating
individuality	frequencies
informality	formality
looking for	looking at
uniqueness	regularities
explanation	description
subjective facts	objective facts
interpreting	describing
looking from the inside	looking from the outside
unstructured	structured
ethnographic, illuminative	statistical

(Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 272)

### **5.2.3 Research Methods Adopted in this Study**

Methodology for a research exercise consists of relevant strategies adopted to present the data collected. Quantitative and qualitative research methods are combined in this study so that these two methods can illuminate each other. As a result, a general picture can be produced to fill the gaps in the investigation. These can be augmented and a complete account can be produced.

The purposes of the study determine the methodology and design of the research. In order to shape the study with true measurement, the method adopted must be reliable in order to limit error. Also, the researcher should consider what is going to be discovered. What skills are required? And how will the methods affect the answers? Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001: 73) remark: “The setting up of the research is a balancing act, for it requires the harmonizing of planned possibilities with workable, coherent practice, i.e. the resolution of the difference between idealism and reality, between what could be done and what will actually work, for at the end of the day research has to work.” In other words, the researcher has to be accepting of the research findings, even if the result is unexpected, for example, the rejection of “new” music syllabus in 2001.

Research methods adopted in this study include questionnaires and interviews.

### **5.3 Research Instruments of this Study**

Generally speaking, if the research instrument is carefully designed to ensure that the significant data are collected, the degree of validity will be higher, i.e. to guarantee the authenticity. Igwe points out that:

A good research paper must be able to provide valid and convincing support for its findings and conclusions. This can only be achieved through detailed and deep probing of the topic. For this reason, what a particular research intends to cover should never be too ambitious, too general or vague. Precision is essential and limited to a specific problem or question.

(Igwe, 1993: 17-18)



Igwe suggests that textbooks are usually not the best sources of information for research papers because “they are mostly written on established facts and not so much on the evaluation of the evidence on which they were made, as is principally the case with research” (1993: 15-16). Igwe advises that journals are better sources of information for research papers because journal articles are written and published much more quickly than books and the contents are usually much more up to date. Furthermore, journal articles may be regarded as primary sources for research because the person who has carried out the investigations is usually the author. Journal articles also frequently refer to earlier and related researches by the author or someone else and such references may also provide useful sources of information (Igwe, 1993: 15-16).

Beyond journals, research papers and theses are also valuable for research. Suggested elements that will be covered in the research instruments for this research include a review of relevant up-to-date journal articles, theses, news cuttings and official reports. As Van Dalen (1979) remarks:

One does not master a single method of obtaining data, such as the questionnaire, and apply it to every problem that arises. Each tool is appropriate for acquiring particular data, and sometimes several instruments must be employed to obtain the information required to solve a problem. Researchers, therefore, must possess considerable knowledge about a wide variety of techniques and instruments.

(Van Dalen cited in Al-Nabhani, 1996: 126)

### Procedures of the Research Instruments

On the other hand, beyond the function of indicating the reliability and validity of research, research instruments also influence the design and outlook of the research to be done. The research instruments of this thesis include reviewing literature, sending questionnaires and doing face-to-face personal interviews. The working steps are, firstly, a pilot study will be undertaken; secondly, a questionnaire will be sent to secondary school principals, school music teachers and students (parents are not considered for this research because usually they have very little interest in the curriculum and syllabus of music education in schools); thirdly, the face-to-face interviews will be undertaken; and fourthly, by reviewing and comparing relevant literature, official and non-official reports will be presented where appropriate (chapter 6). Also the hypotheses will be tested after the feedback of questionnaires and interviews are received (section 6.1).

#### **5.3.1 Questionnaire**

Except the literature review, the following description (sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2) is derived from information provided in course modules I, II and III presented by Hull University representatives in Hong Kong during the period June to November 1998.

Generally speaking, a questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information which includes structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyze (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 245). A common sequence in designing a questionnaire is that:

ethical issues;  
approaching the planning of a questionnaire;  
operationalizing the questionnaire;  
structured, semi-structured and unstructured questionnaires;  
avoiding pitfalls in question writing;  
dichotomous questions;  
multiple choice questions;  
rank ordering;  
rating scales  
open-ended questions;  
asking sensitive questions;  
sequencing the questions;  
questionnaires containing few verbal items;  
the layout of the questionnaires;  
covering letters/sheets and follow-up letters;  
piloting the questionnaires;  
practical considerations in questionnaire design;  
postal questionnaires;  
processing questionnaire data.

(Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 245)

The common advantages of questionnaires are those of efficient use of time, anonymity for the respondent, possibility of a high return rate and, with standardized questions, easy to analyze. However, the limitations of questionnaires may include that the information collected tends to describe rather than explain why things are how they are, information can be superficial; and the time needed to draft and pilot the questionnaire is often underestimated. As a result, the usefulness of the questionnaire is reduced if preparation has been inadequate. The researcher will have to judge the appropriateness of using a questionnaire for data collection, and what kind of questionnaire it will be. At the preliminary stage of design, it can sometimes be helpful to use a flow chart technique to plan the sequencing of questions thus the

researchers are able to anticipate the type and range of responses that their questions are likely to elicit (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000: 245-246).

The data gathered from the questionnaires in this research were analyzed by means of the 5-point Likert scale in this study. The Likert scale is usually considered as effective for evaluating attitudes which include five possible responses to each statement: strongly agree, agree, no comment, disagree and strongly disagree, so as to ascertain the attitudes of people. However, this method can check roughly the responses which the interviewees choose, a high degree of detail is not provided.

### **5.3.2 Interview**

Three classes of interview may be distinguished: the structured, semi-structured and unstructured.

#### *Structured Interview*

The characteristics of structured interviews are that pre-established questions and pre-set response categories are prepared for the respondent. The same questions in the same order are all delivered in a standardized manner. Usually the respondent answers only “yes”, “no” or “do not know”. As a result, the responses are limited with little self-expression. This type of interview is not suitable for studies searching for open-ended ideas, like this piece of research.

#### *Semi-structured Interview*

Structured questions are set also, but then probe more deeply, using open-ended

questions for collecting more complicated data. In other words, the nature of this kind of interview allows more objectivity. Opinions and reasons behind the choice of the answers become more persuasive. Usually a semi-structured interview is considered ideal for education research, like this study.

#### *Unstructured Interview*

The unstructured interview is also called the ethnographic interview. Through the conversation, the complex behaviour of people in the enquiry is explored. Thus the insights of the interviews required the researcher's in-depth means of semi-structured interviews technique. This kind of interview deals with the scientific description of individual human societies, which is not suitable for this study.

Interview data were presented in a straightforward form in this study. Comparing the answers in the completed questionnaires, the researcher has to look for the similarities and differences. The interview is an oral questionnaire with open-ended questions. The relationship is face-to-face. Talking face to face can enhance the understanding of the problems and the researcher can understand the feelings of the respondents, thus building up a good relationship with them which can facilitate the implementation of change in this research. On the other hand, the researcher has to try to get into the interviewee's ideas. The responses captured may be complicated, in-depth, and vivid and nuanced.

## **5.4 Approaches of Analysis**

The following description (sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2) is derived from a Ph.D. thesis (Su, 2003).

### **Summarizing Content Analysis**

The common feature used for content analysis is the function of categories. In the present study, data collected are categorized into four main groups: influential persons in the field (section 6.4), secondary school principals (section 6.2), teachers (section 6.3) and HKCEE/HKALE students (sections 6.6. and 6.7). Through objective and systematic data-processing, the information is summarized and compared. Meanwhile, relevant factors are carefully drawn for the research issues and displayed by quantitative description. For the reason of precision, data with the same meanings are omitted from the process of summarizing content analysis.

### **Constant Comparative Analysis**

Systematic constant making of comparisons is an important conceptual development in the analysis process, especially for qualitative research. Usually data are self-explanatory. Similarities and differences which appear should be grouped or categorized (section 7.1). As a result, continuing the process throughout the analysis can build up a number of theories.

## **5.5 Hypotheses of this Study**

Igwe (1985: 21) states that for an orderly and logical development of doing a research, hypotheses or assumptions should be established on the basis of which the

investigation is to be carried out. The hypotheses may be derived from theoretical assumptions, or formulated empirically or experimentally through observation or factor analysis. By whatever means they are arrived at, the following should be recorded:

- 1) the number of factors at work in the situation;
- 2) the nature of the factors and how they differ from one another;
- 3) the degree of interaction among the factors; and
- 4) the extent or magnitude of their influence.

(Igwe, 1985: 21-22)

The common three methods by which hypotheses may be tested are the descriptive method, the statistical method and the experimental method (Igwe, 1985: 21-22). Usually, hypothesis should possess some such characteristics as that they should be:

- 1) an answer to the proposed problems. (However, there is no definite answer for music education.)
- 2) testable through empirical investigation. (Nevertheless, problems in music education are usually flexible and debatable.)
- 3) stated clearly using the simplest terms to convey the thought. (Whereas, words alone usually do not mean explicit explanation in music education.)
- 4) consistent with what is known. (However, there is no eternal answer in music education.)

Based on the above limitations and the objectives of this research, the following five null hypotheses are proposed (**H**):

- H1:** The decline of entries into HKCEE and HKALE music examinations is not a cause for concern.
- H2:** The Hong Kong secondary school music curriculum does not require any major modifications.
- H3:** The contribution of music education to the Hong Kong secondary school curriculum is not significant for a balanced curriculum.
- H4:** Hong Kong secondary school music teachers do not require a re-constructed program of in-service training.
- H5:** The form and shape of future music education in Hong Kong should not include the Chinese tradition.

#### **5.5.1 Administration of the Research Instrument on Data Collection Planning of the Study**

To carry out the study, a variety of research tools have been used in order to gather the necessary information needed. Like many other researches in education, these include survey (e.g. syllabi and examination papers.), literature review, questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, site visits (i.e. classroom visits), observation, comparison and interpretation. First of all, the researcher took the following steps to administer the questionnaires and to collect the necessary data:

Step 1: Questionnaires -- the researcher sent a letter to the school principals and music teachers for answering the questionnaires.

Step 2: Interviews -- Oppenheim (1966) recommended that the personal administration of questionnaires usually ensures a high response rate and



accurate sampling. The people being considered as appropriate are:

- 1) Dr. CHAM Lai Shuk-ching, The Music Officer, Curriculum Development Council  
(about HKCEE/HKALE syllabi and the new Arts Education starting in 2005).
- 2) Dr. NG Yuen-fan Fanny, Cultural & Technical Unit, Curriculum Development  
Institute Education Department (about Hong Kong secondary schools music  
curriculum).
- 3) Mr. YU Shu-tak, Subject Officer (Music), Hong Kong Examinations Authority  
(about HKCEE / HKALE music examinations and Arts Education).

As will be reported in section 5.7 (pilot study and completed questionnaires) the most influential person in the field turned up from the feedback is Dr. CHAM Lai Shuk-ching. Dr. Cham introduced Mr. Yu to the researcher for this study. However, Dr. Ng rejected the interview politely for she was no more involved in this area.

The following chart indicates the steps the researcher undertook in this research:

### **Planning on the Research**

The current state of H.K. secondary schools music lessons (curriculum contents) (syllabus reveal)	Music curriculum in Hong Kong (literature review)	Theoretical / philosophical statues
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Issues / criteria concerning music education in Hong Kong  
(practical situation and document reports)

New Arts Education starting in 2005  
(Official documents)

Survey instruments-- music in classroom: views of secondary school  
principals, teachers, students, and policy makers  
(questionnaires & interviews)

Classroom music: observation/ Checklists (classroom visits)	Evaluation / recommendation (researcher's suggestions)
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(Figure 5.1)

#### **5.5.2 Survey Instruments – Working Procedures of this Study**

The survey instruments used for this research consist of questionnaires sent to target secondary school principals, music teachers and HKCEE/HKALE music candidates.

Also face-to-face interviews and site visits (i.e. classroom visits) were undertaken. These will now be presented.

### Questionnaires

1) Al-Nabhani said that: "...statements on questionnaires collected through investigation must be relevant to the specific objectives of the investigation." (Al-Nabhani, 1996: 126) Furthermore, Oppenheim (1966) points out that: "...a questionnaire is a scientific tool and therefore must be constructed with great care in line with specific aims and objectives of investigation." (cited in Al-Nabhani, 1996:126). In other words, a questionnaire is not merely a list of question, but also a scientific tool constructed for a specific purpose. Oppenheim explained that "...a questionnaire has a task to do, its function is measurement. Therefore, the specification should clearly state in the aim the variables to be measured" (cited in Al-Nabhani, 1996: 127). Usually, primary data can be drawn from the questionnaire completed.

### Exemptions for Questionnaires

International schools in Hong Kong are not included for this research because they do not follow the local curriculum. New schools which do not extend beyond form 3 are thus also excluded. On the other hand, because the questionnaires will be sent to secondary school principals, music teachers and students, the questions are not exactly the same (appendix IX). Data analysis and the results of this research are presented in chapter 6. Meanwhile the results of related research are compared (section 7.4).

Drafting the questionnaires, based on the guidelines above and information given from the module courses, the following hints are taken into consideration:

- 1) Be clear about the purpose.
- 2) Frame a list of areas of interest.
- 3) Make a concept map indicating how the parts relate and whom it might be good to ask.
- 4) Clarity. Make questions unambiguous, avoid double negatives and avoid double barreled questions.
- 5) Be clear about the factual basis behind opinions. Will respondents have ready access to the information being sought? If not, then a low response rate or mere guesswork may be obtained

### Interviews

When doing the interviews, the following points are considered as well. The researcher should:

- 1) Understand the interviewee's constructs or beliefs.
- 2) Take into account whether the situation is unknown or unclear.
- 3) Note where the subject matter is confidential or commercially sensitive.
- 4) Be aware that the interviewee may give information only in a one to one form and in a non-written / recording manner.

(Notes given from module courses, Hull University, 1998)

### Findings

In addition, it is important to note that the characteristics of a sound survey are that

there are specific objectives, sound choice of population or sample, reliable and valid data collecting instruments, appropriate analysis and with clear, accurate and coherent reporting of findings. To conclude with Oppenheim's opinion (1992) on researching technique: "Essentially research techniques are concerned with measurement, quantification and instrument building and with making sure our instruments are appropriate, valid and reliable".

### **5.5.3 Fieldwork: Centralized Scheme and Visiting the Teachers' Center**

**(the North Point Center, H.K.)**

#### Centralized Scheme

The Centralized Scheme is a scheme specifically organized for HKCEE music candidates established by the Music Office, Hong Kong Examination Authority in 1982. The researcher successfully interviewed a pre-candidate who participated this scheme for the examination in 1996. These are the findings:

- 1) Before starting the course, applicant students should take a music theory examination, equivalent to grade 5 ABRSM standard.
- 2) There was a total of about 40 candidates in the class, but only about 15 were left in the last few months.
- 3) The course lasted for 12 months.
- 4) The course was described as complicated and difficult to follow.

The following are the regulations for the Centralized Scheme students:

- 1) All students are required to attend the course regularly and punctually. There will be no classes on public and school holidays except under unusual circumstances.
- 2) In case of absence, the teacher-in-charge should be informed in writing by the parents giving sufficient reasons. All claims for sick leave should be supported by medical certificates. Written excuse from parents and / or medical certificates should be submitted to the teacher-in-charge as soon as possible when the student returns to class.
- 3) Absence from class for three consecutive weeks without sufficient reasons may lead to serious consequences. Such cases will be brought to the attention of the Principal for action. If a student's attendance is less than 80% within the academic year, he / she is not allowed to sit for the term examinations.
- 4) Withdrawals from the course should only be made in writing to the Music Section, Advisory Inspectorate, Education Department, through the Principal.
- 5) In the event of public announcement by the Director of Education that all classes to be closed as a result of adverse weather conditions (e.g. Tropical cyclone or rainstorm), the classes will be cancelled.

(Regulation provided by the interviewed Centralized Scheme student)

It can be seen that withdrawal from the course is not easy. This may imply that the resources being put in the Centralized Scheme are relatively extensive and that the authorities hope that they are not being wasted. However, the large percentage of withdrawals which have to be made in writing, reflects the dilemma.

#### Visiting the Teachers' Center (the North Point Center, Hong Kong)

Some useful materials were collected from the North Point Teachers' Center. A handbook called "The Application of Information Technology in the Teaching of Music – Handbook for Music Teachers" was found (published by the Creative Arts and Home Economics Section (Music), Advisory Inspectorate Division, Education Department, Hong Kong in 1999). This handbook is about the preparation for teaching and learning of music through information technology. The idea was came from the 1997 Policy Address by the Chief Executive Hon TUNG Chee-hwa

announced the formulation of a “Five-year Information Technology education Strategy” to promote the application of information technology (IT) in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in schools (*Handbook for Music Teachers*, 1999: 91).

The Foreword says:

...As information technology (IT) in music education has developed rapidly in recent years, electronic music is no longer the monopoly of composers and music scholars. The approach of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century means that music teachers in Hong Kong should not neglect the importance and far-reaching effects of using computers and synthesizers in music teaching.

(*Handbook for Music Teachers*, 1999: 90)

It also reports that:

Owing to limited resources, only ten secondary schools were selected to join the two phases of the pilot project held from 1995 to 1998. The pilot projects concluded with the presentations of the teachers and students, who expressed their fresh understanding of music teaching and learning, as well as their stimulated thinking in music enjoyment and creative music activities.

(*Handbook for Music Teachers*, 1999: 90)

## **5.6 Validity and Reliability**

If a piece of research is invalid and unreliable, it is worthless. The researcher must have confidence in the elements of the research plan, data acquisition, data processing analysis and interpretation. Steps have been taken to in the present thesis minimize invalidity. Validity is about the accuracy of the research. In qualitative research, data collected should be pinpointed, in-depth with enlightenment. In quantitative research, careful sampling with appropriate statistical measurement is important.

Also, reliability and validity are important for doing research because they explain why the research instruments being adapted are relevant and suitable. Goode & Hatt (1952: 153) define Reliability as “the extent to which repetition of the study would result in the same data and conclusions” (quoted from *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 1987: 74).

Reliability enables the research outcome to be trusted and dependable and validity can help to ensure the work to be done is logical and reasonably concluded. Good and Brophy (1990: 689) stated that "... at the most basic level a test is said to be valid if it measures what it is supposed to measure". In other words, an item is said to be valid if it can measure accurately the phenomenon for which it was designed. The validity of a measure, as Hopkins and Stanley (1981:76) pointed out, is how well it fulfils the function for which it is being used. If it lacks validity, the information it provides is useless. The validity of a test can be viewed as the accuracy of specified inferences made from its scores. These inferences will pertain to:

- 1) performance on a “universe” of items (content validity);
- 2) performance on some criterion (criterion-related validity); or
- 3) the degree to which certain psychological traits or constructs are actually represented by test performance (construct validity). During the process of test validation one examines the relationships between test scores and other empirical data and logical considerations.

(Hopkins and Stanley, 1981: 76)

Nevertheless, there are some variables for this research. These can be divided into two types: independent variables and dependant variables. Independent variables are such things as students’ aptitude and personal motivation. Dependant variables are, for



example, the status of music lessons in schools and the design of the syllabus. On the other hand, limitation is always there as Borg and Gall (1989) reported: “Every questionnaire must be tested and refined under real world conditions. Even after years of experience, no expert can write a perfect questionnaire” (cited in Al-Nahabni, 1996: 132).

### **5.6.1 Validity**

Validity means having some foundation based on truth. It is essential for any effective research. There are several kinds of validity, for example (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001: 105-106):

- content validity;
- criterion-related validity;
- construct validity;
- internal validity;
- external validity
- concurrent validity;
- face validity;
- jury validity;
- predictive validity;
- consequential validity;
- systemic validity;
- catalytic validity;
- ecological validity;
- cultural validity;
- descriptive validity;
- interpretive validity;
- theoretical validity;
- evaluative validity.

Above all, validity indicates the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed or intended to measure.

#### **5.6.1.1 Validity of the Questionnaires**

As has been mentioned before in section 5.6, the questions should be pinpointed, valid, appropriate, fit for answer and not too broad. Also, questions should be understandable for both HKCEE and HKALE students to answer. In this research, the researcher pays attention to several factors to fulfill the validity of the questionnaires. First of all, the groups of people being questioned are the right ones and representative of the population. Secondly, questions are designed to be precise, but to lead open-ended answers with open mind nature which will encourage the respondents to provide ideas freely. And thirdly, the words used are simple and understandable.

#### **5.6.1.2 Validity of the Interviews**

As has been mentioned before, in section 5.6, questions should be asked precisely (that is, they should fit the purpose of the study) as worded and in the same order as they appear on the research schedule. People for the interviews should be suitable so that useful comments and ideas can be collected.

#### **5.6.2 Reliability**

Reliability is concerned with precision and accuracy. A reliable instrument for a piece

of research will yield similar data from similar respondents over time. That means that the measurement procedure will consistently yield the same result on repeated observations.

#### **5.6.2.1 Reliability of the Questionnaires**

One of the disadvantages of doing a questionnaire is the possibility of misinterpretation of the questions. Thus the researcher makes sure that all questions are clearly understood (the researcher was even present at a class in case students had any problem to understand). The arrangement of the questions is carefully and logically conducted. In case of any unexpected answers, the researcher accepts any variables in the responses.

#### **5.6.2.2 Reliability of the Interviews**

In order to gain reliability in interviews, questions should be asked which precisely fit the purpose of the research, as it is worded and in the same order as it appears on the schedule. On the other hand, the key point is to minimize the bias. Simple words should be used and complicated expression should be avoided.

### **5.7 Pilot Study and Sample Size**

A pilot study is a preliminary test on hypotheses which leads to more precise of the hypotheses in the main study. The purpose is economy of time and efficiency. Terms used should be clearly understood, ambiguity should be avoided and suggestions are usually provided for the participants to encourage them to reveal more opinions. This

enables frank expression of difficulties and it brings more insights towards the questions. This can also stimulate the researcher to gain greater insights into her own experiences as well.

Before carrying out the research and using the instruments (i.e. sending questionnaires and carrying out the face-to-face interviews), the pilot study is tested on a small sample of respondents derived from the same populations that will be used in the final research. The aim of this section is to describe the pilot study and the main studies to be undertaken, by:

1. illustrating the samples involved;
2. selecting the measures considered suitable for testing;
3. illustrating the procedures adopted for the administration of this research;
4. demonstrating the statistical methods intended for data analysis purposes;
5. explaining their relevance to the objectives of this research and the abovementioned null hypotheses; and
6. selecting representatives for different groups in the field of secondary school music education in Hong Kong.

The ultimate goal of doing a pilot study is to test the hypothesis (section 5.5) and whether the research instruments are reliable and valid (section 5.7). A pilot study can help the researcher to see how the questionnaires will be conducted at the time of the main study and possibly how long respondents take to complete them. On this basis, any items that do not yield usable data can be removed. Furthermore, items may be added to fill any data gaps and unclear questions can be reworded.

Before the questionnaires are piloted, the precautions that are taken into consideration are, firstly, to make sure that the pilot sample is as representative as possible (e.g. secondary schools are drawn from different areas - Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and New Territories. Relevant map is on the next page). The researcher chose eighteen secondary schools (i.e. six secondary schools to be chosen from each area) to ensure that the size of the pilot study was not excessive. Secondly, she found out which secondary schools have students who attend the Centralized Scheme music lessons. Thirdly, she made sure that the questions on the questionnaires were useful and appropriate for this research.

#### **5.7.1 Location and Method of Pilot Study**

The location of the pilot study was Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and New Territories and the method of pilot study for this research was sending questionnaires to secondary school principals and music teachers. Because HKCEE/HKALE music students needed the researcher's explanation how to fill in the questionnaires, this part was done in a later stage when the fieldwork was undertaken (i.e. by school visits). Furthermore, face-to-face interviews with representative persons in the field have been carried out at the end of the research.

#### **5.7.2 Results of the Target Population and Sample of the Study**

The total group with which the study is concerned is called the population while the group of individuals to be actively involved in the study is referred to as the sample. The prime concern in selection of a sample is to assure its representativeness

(Hayman, 1968: 40). In other words, if the questionnaires and interviews are conducted with the students and teachers who do not relate to this research, this research will be unrepresentative and too broad. Thus the target population and sample of the study is focused on the people concerned in the field only.

For the pilot study, 18 questionnaires were sent to secondary school principals and another 18 questionnaires were sent to the same schools' music teachers. 4 school principals and 4 music teachers replied, a response rate of 22%. 2 schools replied that they provided HKCEE music courses for their students (one school name is provided, the Ying Wa Girls' School) and none replied that the school provided HKALE music courses.

### **5.7.3 Results related to Questionnaires for Secondary Schools Principals and Music Teachers**

The feedback of the pilot study was exciting and useful. Respondents tended to show that they were actively involved by giving some valuable and interesting comments. For example, when asked about why there are few candidates participating in HKCEE/HKALE music examinations, feedback from the replied school principals is that:

#### **Pilot Study: Summary of Secondary School Principals who Replied**

- 1) "Students have to take the course as an extra subject with extra time."
- 2) "Society does not emphasize the importance of music in education."

- 3) “Very few music teachers are able to organize HKCEE/HKALE music courses.”
- 4) “Staff deployment, timetable constraints, and students’ interest are constraints in the subject’s development.”
- 5) “The new Arts Education starting in 2005 including music must be promoted step by step, especially for teacher training.”

The following is a summary of the feedback from the secondary school music teachers.

#### Pilot Study: Summary of Music Teachers who Replied

About textbooks:

- 1) “No reference book can be found for the part of Chinese music in HKCEE music examination and no teaching books for HKCEE music are published.”

About curriculum:

- 2) “A new music curriculum must be developed for form 1 to form 7 students.”
- 3) “Form 1 to form 7 music courses should be provided. For example, music history. To teach one musical period for each year form.”
- 4) “For the new coming Arts Education, music should be given more in proportion.”
- 5) “Music lessons cannot be taken over. Lower forms students are not suitable for Arts Education (i.e. art, music, drama, dance and media art) because they usually lack basic music skills and knowledge.”
- 6) “HKCEE music course is not as easy a subject as pupils thought it might be.”

About influential person in the field:

- 7) “The influential person in Hong Kong music education is Dr. CHAM Lai Shuk-ching.”

About the syllabi and examinations:

- 8) “The HKCEE music syllabus is out-dated.”
- 9) “The contents of the HKCEE music examination are difficult and this examination has no respectable nor practical stance.”
- 10) “The school does not arrange the time table for teaching HKCEE / HKALE music courses.”
- 11) “The syllabus is too aggressive and it covers too many things to be studied. HKCEE or HKALE music examinations are not compulsory for taking music as a subject in University in Hong Kong. Thus the examinations are being neglected. The HKCEE music course is provided by the Centralized Scheme provide on Saturdays. Much spare time has to be given up by the students.”

Other comments:

- 12) “If there is no reform, no student will take HKCEE music course.”
- 13) “There are no obvious musical characteristics in Hong Kong. Even local composers’ style is imitated from overseas.”

It is concluded that the feedbacks from the replied principals and the feedback from the teachers who replied are similar in nature that they generally think that the music syllabi should be changed (simpler); encouragement is important for teaching music / arts in school; and for long term reform, teacher training becomes very important.



## **5.8 Changes to Instruments as a Result of the Pilot Study**

The result of the pilot study suggested that the instruments which it was propose to use were basically suitable and fit for the research. Based on the feedback of the pilot study, a sound secondary music syllabus should possess the following characteristics:

### About the syllabi

The contents should not be too wide. Attention on some areas should be focused, which should match the general ability of the majority of students. Also, the contents should be recognized as reasonable, with good selected areas. In addition, syllabi must link with university entrance requirements.

### For the music teachers

Relevant required teaching methodology should be understood. The instruction should be easy to follow and specific, also basic skill and basic knowledge requirement are explained. In addition, guidelines and teaching resources must be approachable and provided.

### For HKCEE/HKALE music students

The learning contents should be easy to understand, easy to follow, interesting and not too wide. As a result, students ought to be involved more easily and actively in the learning process.

To conclude, the main findings from the pilot study are that:

1. Teachers' and students' feelings and expectations must be considered for a new music curriculum at secondary schools in Hong Kong which needs their support.
2. Both teachers and pupils should find the music curriculum interesting, valuable, not too wide, up to date and easy to follow.
3. In-service training is important to guarantee the teachers are well equipped.
4. The objectives of the syllabus should be practical in approach.
5. An influential person in the field was identified in the pilot study: Dr. CHAM Lai Shuk-ching, the Music Officer, Music Section, Hong Kong Examination Authority.
6. One of the schools which provides HKCEE music lessons and enters candidates for the examinations is the Ying Wa Girls' School in Hong Kong Island. The researcher approached the music teacher for further interviews, both for a personal interview and for interviews with her students by sending a request letter and making phone calls. However, no response was received.

As a whole, the pilot study worked as assumed. For the reason of improvement, some rewordings were made to the questionnaire to secondary schools principals. These include:

- 1) Question number 2a: the year for asking how many candidates participated in HKCEE/HKALE music examinations at the schools was changed from 2000 to 2001 (the pilot study was undertaken in 2000 and the questionnaires were undertaken in 2001).
- 2) Question number 2b: the option "The music curriculum is impractical" was changed into "The music curriculum is too wide and too difficult" for better understanding.

- 3) An additional question was added in the questionnaires for secondary school music teachers (page 10, number 10), HKCEE music students (page 6, number 9) and HKALE music students (page 6, number 10).
- 4) For the reason that some respondents were actively providing their information, which include some columns were added (to the questionnaires), the names of the schools, principals and teachers; their gender, etc.

## **5.9 Information Announced in September 2000: an Additional**

### **Factor affecting the Research Direction**

Because Chinese Music Papers (both HKCEE and HKALE) are not available for this research, on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2000 the researcher telephoned the CDC to discuss this difficulty and asked for assistance. The answer was that since few candidates chose this section, the Chinese Music Papers are being ‘frozen’ – that means that no more Chinese music examination papers will be published – and it is said that the Chinese Music Paper has been virtually eliminated.

On the other hand, as has been mentioned before, although the 2000 syllabi show that the planned revolution in secondary music courses is not complete, however, another new planning strategy was announced on *Sing Tao Daily Post* on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2000 that in September 2005 Arts Education will be substituted and started (before that, Arts Education will be introduced first in primary schools and junior secondary schools, i.e. forms 1 to 3, in 2002 September). The relevant newspaper article has been translated into English (appendix VIII).

### **5.10 Summary of this Chapter: Research Methods Used for this Study**

The researcher studied three doctoral theses (about secondary school music curriculum in Hong Kong) which include Foo (1973), Wong (1990) and Ng (1997). The research methods used are direct description with a mathematically simple approach for the reason that music education is about music, and human behaviour results from the process of teaching and learning music: it is not a scientific subject. Thus complicated methods are not suitable. Research methods used for this study include 5-point Likert scales, summarizing content and constant comparative analysis. Furthermore, some tables, figures and documents are provided as supplements.

## **Chapter 6 Findings of the Research**

### **Introduction**

This chapter discloses the findings of this research. Data analysis and a comparison with the results of related research follow in chapter 7. The findings of this research include the feedback from the questionnaires (sections 6.2, 6.3, 6.6 and 6.7), interviews (section 6.4) and fieldwork (i.e. classroom observation, section 6.5). These data are going to be explored in the following section.

### **Quantitative Research**

#### **6.1 The Distribution and Collection of the Questionnaires**

In July 2002, the researcher sent 111 questionnaires to the target secondary school principals. These schools have students who are attending the Centralized Scheme in 2001-2002 (as known from a confidential document provided by Dr. Cham). In total 19 questionnaires were received. The researcher sent the questionnaires again to the principals who had not answer in October. 22 more principals replied: in total 41 were answered. The response rate is 37%.

#### **6.2 The Report of the Questionnaires: Secondary School Principals**

39 principals replied that their schools do not provide HKCEE music lesson at schools and none of the 41 provide HKALE music lesson. There were 23 students from 9 secondary schools (7+2+2+2+2+2+2+2+2) who took the HKCEE music examination in 2001-2002 and 5 candidates attended the HKALE music examination at three schools (3+1+1). The majority of them took the examination as individual candidates.

To show this information diagrammatically:

Year: 2001-2002

N= Without music course provided at school

Y= With music course provided at school

School	HKCEE candidate number	HKALE candidate number
A	7(Y)	3(N)
B	2(N)	0(N)
C	2(N)	0(N)
D	2(N)	0(N)
E	2(N)	0(N)
F	2(N)	0(N)
G	2(N)	0(N)
H	2(N)	0(N)
I	2(N)	0(N)
J	0(N)	1(N)
K	0(N)	1(N)

**Total:** 11 schools      23 HKCEE candidates      5 HKALE candidates

At 9 schools

at 3 schools

The findings show that only one school provides an HKCEE music course at school. This implies that students from other schools who took the examinations either studied the course privately or attended the Centralized Scheme Course. Some of the

reasons which secondary school principals suggested why HKCEE/HKALE music curricula are not provided at schools are that:

1) too few students apply for the subject and too few candidates take the examination (35)

2) the qualification of the music teacher is insufficient (10); and

3) the music curriculum is too wide and too difficult (5).

(More than one reason was accepted)

When asked if the 2005 Arts Education curriculum should be introduced in the schools, 32 responses were “Not Sure”, 4 said “No” and 3 said “Yes” (2 principals did not make a response to this question). This reflects the view that the majority of the school principals have very limited information and knowledge about Arts Education.

In the following, the principals’ responses for the 5 null hypotheses for this research are explored (Appendix IX):

#### **6.2.1 Principals: Table I – Responses for the 5 Null Hypotheses**

1) “The declining entries of HKCEE and HKALE music examinations is not a matter for concern.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
5	19	11	6	0
12.2%	46.3%	26.9%	14.6%	0%

- 2) “The present Hong Kong secondary school music curriculum does not required any change.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
2	20	19	0	0
4.9%	48.8%	46.3%	0%	0%

- 3) “Music education has no value for the balance of Hong Kong secondary school curriculum.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
16	23	1	1	0
39%	56.1%	2.4%	2.4%	0%

- 4) “In-service training is not necessary for Hong Kong secondary school music teachers.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
18	23	0	0	0
43.9%	56.1%	0%	0%	0%

- 5) “The model of future music education in Hong Kong should not include Chinese traditional music.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
11	27	3	0	0
26.8%	65.9%	7.3%	0%	0%



The above findings show that principals are generally agreed that:

- 1) music education is valued for the balance of Hong Kong secondary school education;
- 2) in-service training for music teachers is important;
- 3) Chinese traditional music should be included; and
- 4) A change for the music curricula is highly supported.

In answer to the question concerning influential persons in Hong Kong music education, some figures were suggested: Dr. YIP Wai-hong (conductor and the chairperson of the Hong Kong Children's Choir), Ms. YIP Wing-sze (conductor), Mr. and Mrs. GWILT (the representatives of the ABRSM in Hong Kong), Dr. CHAN Wing-wah (composer, professor of music at Hong Kong Chinese University), "the leadership of the Education Department", and "all secondary school principals". However, these figures are not directly related to the field of HKCEE/HKALE music curricula. This implies that principals who replied confuse the differences between music education, performance, conducting and composing.

A) Principals' Feedback: concerning the HKCEE/HKALE Music Curricula:

When the principals were asked why so few candidates participate in HKCEE/HKALE music examinations, it was suggested that:

1. "The HKCEE/HKALE music curricula are too difficult and wide."
2. "The HKCEE/HKALE music curricula are not promoted and developed ideally."
3. "The HKCEE/HKALE music curricula are irrelevant to students' promotion to

form 6 or to the university.”

4. “Music curriculum at senior secondary level is cancelled by the majority of schools.”
5. “The music curricula are rarely introduced at schools.”
6. “The syllabus of the HKCEE music is impractical and is unlinked to form 1 to form 3 music curricula.”
7. “It seems that the HKCEE/HKALE music curricula are not easy.”

These suggestions reflect the unsatisfactory status of HKCEE/HKALE music curricula.

**B) Principals’ Feedback: about the Usefulness of the Curricula:**

1. “Music is narrow for students’ future careers.”
2. “Parents and students do not regard music as important.”
3. “The recognition of music as a subject is lower than other subjects.”
4. “There are other more important subjects to devote time to and there are other more respectable bodies for assessing music achievement than the Education Authority” (i.e. ABRSM/TCL).
5. “The result of the HKCEE music is not considered for form 6 entry.”
6. “Most Hong Kong people believe that music is good and good only for entertainment, but not essential for earning a livelihood – not even good enough to be considered as an academic subject.”
7. “People prefer to choose an academic subject. Subject like music is being neglected.”
8. “Usually students are more serious on the subjects which are related and useful to

‘A’ level and tertiary level.”

9. “The result of HKALE music examination is not considered at universities in Hong Kong, thus the relevant course is repeated at tertiary level.”

Generally speaking, the curricula are criticized as impractical.

C) Principals’ Feedback: about the Students:

1. “The majority of students are below-standard at music.”
2. “Students’ musical abilities are varied.”
3. “Time for practice is necessary. Students simply do not have much spare time for it.”
4. “Students may play piano and sit for examinations. But if they are asked to study the music curriculum, this is another thing. They usually prefer to spend more time on other more important subjects.”
5. “Only a few students want to become musicians in the future. Usually they treat music lessons as fun, not a serious subject at school.”

It can be seen that music at school is usually treated as unimportant to the students.

D) Principals’ Feedback: Mixed Reasons:

1. “The HKCEE/HKALE music courses are not provided at the schools. Very few students put music education as their choice for tertiary studies. Career opportunities for music graduates are also narrow.”
2. “To study HKCEE/HKALE music is very time-consuming. And it leads to a narrow range of career choice.”

3. “Generally speaking, the promotion of music education at primary schools is not ideal. Students’ musical talent is usually not being supported by families.”
4. “Academic subjects for form 4 and form 5 students are too heavy. To take an extra subject like music is overload for them. Besides, the HKCEE music examination content that requires students should possess a certain degree of music instrument playing ability. This does not fit for all students as well.”
5. “Very few candidates participate in HKCEE.HKALE music examinations because of the insufficient teaching training, facilities, low attitude of parents; and there are too many subjects for students to deal with.”

Considering the suggestions listed above, issues raised from the subject are caused by a number of channels such as the contents of the curriculum itself; the professionalism of music teachers; the attitudes of parents and students. The following are extra comments provided by some of the secondary school principals who replied:

E) Principals’ Feedback: about Music Education and Music Curriculum

1. “There is inadequate attention to music education in the secondary school junior forms.”
2. “It seems that the junior secondary school music curriculum at present is a promising foundation.”
3. “Music education can assist the student’s whole person development, especially emotional education, appreciation and expression.”
4. “HKCEE/HKALE music curricula can enhance students’ personal development because music is a supplement to nurture students’ character development with a in-depth nature.”

5. “HKCEE/HKALE music curricula do not reflect Hong Kong social characteristics and local culture because they lack local pop songs. On the other hand, students should have opportunities to learn, for example, composing and filling in the words for the songs.”
6. “Music education should be promoted, not enforced.”

It can be seen that the principals’ ideas about music education and the HKCEE / HKALE music curricula are varied which will probably influence the development of music at their schools. Further suggestions from the secondary school principals who replied follow:

F) Principals’ Feedback: about Arts Education

1. “The new Arts Education for primary school should be 10% - 15% in proportion to the whole curriculum and 8% - 10% for junior secondary school level.”
2. “If there is an examination for Arts Education, time is extremely limited for students.”
3. “Arts Education is a good idea but professional teachers are important to support the system, or it will not be successful.”
4. “Arts Education should be included in the senior secondary curriculum assuming that the other elements of the curriculum will also be amended.”
5. “To introduce Arts Education from the year of 2002 at primary school and junior secondary levels is too rushed for the time being.”

Arts education attracts people’s attention with certain expectation although school principals usually show their worries about the success of the new curriculum.

G) Principals' Feedback: about reform in Hong Kong secondary school music education

1. "Reform should be enforced in Hong Kong secondary school music education. Besides, simplicity has been an obvious aim during the last few years' education reform in Hong Kong."
2. "When reform is enforced, both traditional Chinese music and minor Chinese tribes' music should be included."
3. "Reform for improvement is always necessary, but to enforce it at this moment may not be good."

Ideas about the reform are varied and independent. It can be imagined that an ideal music curriculum cannot please all the people – this is one of the difficulties. On the other hand, the majority of the secondary school principals who replied do not understand the requirements of tertiary entry. When asked if the HKALE music curriculum links with the university music curriculum 22 principals chose "Not Sure", 13 chose "Yes" and 4 chose "No" (2 did not respond). On whether a reform on Hong Kong secondary school music education should be enforced, 20 agree, 3 disagree and 18 have no opinion. These show that whether a reform is a promising suggestion still remains in doubt.

The following are the responses about the 6 research statements:

### 6.2.2 Principals: Table II – Responses for the 6 Research Statements

1) “Music education can assist the student’s whole person development.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
22	19	0	0	0
53.7%	46.3%	0%	0%	0%

100% of the principals who replied support the idea that music education can assist students’ whole person development.

2) “HKCEE/HKALE music curricula match the musical learning abilities of the general secondary school students.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	3	26	7	4
2.4%	7.3%	63.4%	17.1%	9.8%

The majority of secondary school principals are not sure about the requirements of the curricula.

3) “HKCEE/HKALE music curricula can enhance the personal development of the students.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
3	13	18	5	2
7.3%	31.7%	43.9%	12.2%	4.9%

About half the principals who replied are not sure if the curricula can enhance the personal development of the students.

- 4) “HKCEE/HKALE music curricula reflect Hong Kong social characteristics and local culture.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	3	27	8	2
2.4%	7.3%	65.9%	19.5%	4.9%

Over half of the responses do not know about the situation.

- 5) “The Curriculum Development Council suggested that from the year 2005, Arts Education should be included in senior secondary curriculum: one to two hour lessons per week with 5% proportionate to the whole curriculum.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
3	22	10	4	2
7.3%	53.7%	24.4%	9.7%	4.9%

Over half agree with the suggestion.

- 6) “Arts Education Committee suggested that, based on point five above, from the year 2002 new arts education should be introduced in primary and junior secondary schools, 1/8 proportionate to the whole curriculum.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
3	20	11	6	2
7.1%	47.6%	26.2%	14.3 %	4.8%

(Remark: one principal ticked two columns for this question – “Agree” for primary school, and “Disagree” for junior secondary level.)

Over half agree to the suggestion.



To conclude, the above findings show that all principals who replied agree that music education can enhance students' whole person development though over 50% replied that they are not sure if HKCEE/HKALE music curricula match the musical learning abilities of the general secondary school students. Some principals are not sure if the curricula reflect Hong Kong social characteristics and local culture, but they usually support Arts Education. Some additional ideas are also given:

A) Principals' Additional Ideas: about Music and Music Education

1. "Music is important because it can soothe individual's emotions and enhance disposition."
2. "Chinese traditional music is badly needed in the music syllabus in order to maintain our tradition."
3. "Music education has its value for the balance of the school curriculum because music training is proved to be beneficial to students in other areas of study as well."
4. "Hong Kong secondary school music education should be enforced because it lacks a continuing supporting system."
5. "Hong Kong secondary school music education emphasizes appreciation but lacks creativity."
6. "Music education is helpful to nurture students' cultural disposition."

Generally speaking, school principals' evaluation of music education about students' development is comparatively high.

B) Principals' Additional Ideas: about Students

1. "Students may not have talent in playing the instruments but they should be instructed to appreciate."

C) Principals' Additional Ideas: about Arts Education

1. "Whether or not to introduce Arts Education curriculum in the senior secondary courses depends on many factors such as staffing, qualifications of teachers, time tabling, students' interest and contents of course."
2. "Our school provides HKCEE/HKALE Arts curricula. For the reason that too few students participate in the music examination and in fact, these music courses are also provided by the Music Office (i.e. the Centralized Scheme), our schools do not consider the new coming Arts Education at this moment."
3. "In proportion to the whole curriculum: 2% for senior secondary curriculum and 5% to 10% for primary and junior secondary schools are appropriate."

D) Principals' Additional Ideas: about HKCEE/HKALE Music Curricula

1. "The declining entries of HKCEE and HKALE music examinations reflect that the school curriculum will become very imbalanced. Students with musical talents are deprived of the opportunity to develop their potential."
2. "HKCEE and HKALE music curricula are totally unlinked and do not match the musical learning abilities of the general secondary school students."

E) Principals' Feedback: about Teachers

1. "We need some efficient music teachers who can stimulate and enhance students' interest on learning music."

2. “Although in-service training is necessary for Hong Kong secondary school music teachers, their workload is already extremely heavy.”
3. “In-service training is necessary for Hong Kong secondary school music teachers because understanding of the social and arts development is essential.”

F) Principals’ Feedback: about Reform

1. “Reform should be enforced in Hong Kong secondary school music education because our students need good music to develop a whole-person character.”
2. “Music courses should be provided from form 1 to 7 in order to develop students’ aesthetic pursuits.”
3. “No reform can be successful if it is enforced without consultation.”
4. “The model of future music education in Hong Kong should include Chinese traditional music because Hong Kong is a mixed cultural society both Chinese and Western.”
5. “I have no idea if the present Hong Kong secondary school music curriculum requires any change because curriculum differs tremendously according to the background of the school.”

It can be seen that a reform of the curriculum should consider a number of factors such as whether its content is good and acceptable.

G) Principals’ Feedback: other Comments

1. “Hong Kong Chinese University has conducted a music course with our students. The result reflects that formal music training (especially instrumental playing) is beneficial to students’ development in other school subjects.”

2. “Those interested in taking HKCEE music would like to consider it as an extra subject – an additional subject to other academic subjects to which they give priority.”
3. “Our school provides arts and design lessons. Thus we will not consider other new subject (e.g. Arts Education to be introduced in 2005).”
4. “The link between the study of music as professional training, in the HKCEE.HKALE curricula, and its study for general social development should be taken into consideration.”

These mixed comments show that different schools have their individual situations. Thus to implement a ‘unique’ music curriculum at schools seems hardly a smooth process. In the following, the feedback of the questionnaires from the secondary school music teachers is going to be examined.

### **6.3 The Report of the Questionnaires: Secondary School Music Teachers**

The researcher sent 111 questionnaires to the secondary music teachers whose schools had students attending the Centralised Scheme in 2001 – 2002. The response was low: only 12 were received. The researcher sent the questionnaires again to the teachers who did not answer, 21 more teachers replied. In total 33 questionnaires were received, a response rate of 30%.

When asked if the HKCEE music teaching books and reference books are sufficient at present, over 60% teachers who replied thought that they are inadequate (9 strongly disagree, 12 disagree, 9 neither agree nor disagree and 3 agree). In answer to a similar

question for the HKALE, a similar response occurred (13 strongly disagree, 6 disagree, 11 neither agree nor disagree and 3 agree). About in-service training for secondary school music teachers, the 66% thought that it is insufficient (19 disagree that it is sufficient, 3 strongly disagree, 6 agree that it is sufficient and 5 neither agree nor disagree). When comparing music examinations in Hong Kong, 25 chose ABRSM/TCL, 11 chose HKCEE/HKALE as useful for candidates' future (3 chose both systems) and 1 indicated no idea for this question. The following ideas explain the difficulties which music teachers commonly encounter in teaching music in secondary schools:

- 1) Students' musical ability varies widely (22);
- 2) The aptitude and interest of the students is comparatively low (17);
- 3) The curriculum is too wide, difficult and impractical (14); and
- 4) Teaching materials are insufficient (11).

(More than one suggestion is acceptable.)

And there are some more suggestions:

- 5) "There are too many students in a class."
- 6) "Teacher training is insufficient."
- 7) "Parents do not support the subject."
- 8) "Music teachers' musical disposition is a problem."
- 9) "Music as a school subject is being neglected."
- 10) "Time allocation for the subject at schools is not enough."
- 11) "Candidate numbers are low and the examinations are not representative."
- 12) "The school schedule for music lessons is insufficient: usually only one lesson per

week or even half lesson (especially when there is some important subject teachers ask for extra time for class work or for taking examinations).”

The following are the teachers’ responses who replied for the 5 null hypotheses of this research (Appendix IX):

### 6.3.1 Teachers: Table I – Responses for the 5 Null Hypotheses

- 1) “The declining entries of HKCEE and HKALE music examinations is not a matter for concern.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
9	17	7	0	0
27.3%	51.5%	21.2%	0%	0%

About 80% teachers who replied agree that the declining entries of the music examinations is a matter for concern.

- 2) “The present Hong Kong secondary school music curriculum does not required any change.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
9	22	2	0	0
27.3%	66.7%	6%	0%	0%

94% teachers suggest the present music curriculum at secondary school in Hong Kong needs a change.

3) “Music education has no value for the balance of Hong Kong secondary school curriculum.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
16	16	1	0	0
48.5%	48.5%	3%	0%	0%

97% teachers agree that music education does have value for the balance of the Hong Kong secondary school curriculum.

4) “In-service training is not necessary for Hong Kong secondary school music teachers.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
16	17	0	0	0
48.5%	51.5%	0%	0%	0%

100% teachers support in-service training.

5) “The model of future music education in Hong Kong should not include Chinese traditional music.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
16	15	2	0	0
48.5%	45.5%	6%	0%	0%

94% teachers agree that Chinese traditional music should be included for the future secondary school music education in Hong Kong.

The above feedback demonstrates that the teachers’ ideas are very similar with clear

inclinations. This probably implies that they understand the circumstances well with similar experience. When asked who the influential persons are in Hong Kong music education, some names turned up: Dr. YIP Wai-hong (conductor), Ms. YIP Wing-sze (conductor), Mr. CHAN Fai-yueng (pop-song writer), Mr. Harry Wong (recorder songs writer), Dr. CHAN Wing-wah (composer, professor at the Hong Kong Chinese University) and Mrs. Gwilt (representative of ABRSM in Hong Kong). Also one teacher who replied mentioned “the team work at Music Section, Education Department”.

On the other hand, suggested reasons for very few candidates participating in the HKCEE/HKALE music examinations are that:

A) Teachers’ Feedback: about Students

1. “The interest of the students in taking the subject is low.”
2. “Students’ musical standards and backgrounds are different.”
3. “Students abandon the subject because it is difficult and impractical for their future careers.”
4. “The pressure of taking other more important subjects is already too heavy for students.”
5. “If students want to take the HKCEE music examination, they must spend extra time on study, for example, to find a private teacher or attend the Centralized Scheme.”



B) Teachers' Feedback: about the HKCEE.HKALE Curricula

1. "The courses are too difficult."
2. "HKCEE/HKALE music results do not act as a useful support for taking music courses at universities in Hong Kong."
3. "The courses are too wide and students should be very good at both languages (i.e. English and Chinese)."
4. "Music examination is difficult and does not match the majority students' ability. The majority of secondary schools do not provide HKCEE music course and even music courses are provided only for junior level at some schools."
5. "HKCEE music course does not link with the forms 1 to 3 music courses."
6. "The recognition of the HKCEE music result is not high – the result is not considered for entrance requirement at form 6."
7. "The music curriculum is too academic, not practical. The ABRSM or TCL music courses are more welcomed."
8. "HKCEE/HKALE music examinations are irrelevant to their promotion to upper forms unless students are going to study music."
9. "HKCEE/HKALE music examinations are not important to students' future career. Even if they want to study music in university, it is not important if they have participated the examinations or not."

C) Teachers' Feedback: about the Centralized Scheme

1. "The time schedule for the courses provided by the Centralized Scheme is not convenient for students."
2. "The location of the courses provided by the Centralized Scheme is inconvenient for some students."

D) Teachers' Feedback: about Music itself

1. "Music is neglected by students and schools."
2. "The public of Hong Kong prefers the subjects of science and commerce. Music as a school subject is highly neglected by parents and students. Usually people, including students, teachers and executives at schools, have very limited knowledge of music. No people are concerned about the subject and the assessment of the examination is vague. Students and teachers do not have confidence that they will get a good mark at the examinations."

E) Teachers' Feedback: about School

1. "Very few schools provide HKCEE music courses."
2. "The majority of secondary schools do not provide music lessons at forms 4 and 5."
3. "School resources distributed to music lessons are usually small."
4. "School resources distributed to HKCEE/HKALE music courses are insufficient."

F) Teachers' Feedback: other Comments

1. "Time allocation for music lessons at school is insufficient. Training for students is thus not enough and the majority of them do not have the interest to participate in the HKCEE/HKALE music examinations."
2. "The standard of music education at primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong is not sound. The recognition of the subject by society and parents is low. Very few secondary schools provide music at senior level. Interested students have to take part in the Centralized Scheme or other music courses outside schools. In addition, training for music teachers is insufficient."

3. “The Centralized Scheme accepts only a limited number of students. Resources at schools are insufficient.”
4. “The school curriculum is too heavy already. It is not easy to study on Saturdays for 2 years (the Centralized Scheme). More students might take HKCEE/HKALE music if the course is offered in their own school where classes can be fitted into their time table.”
5. “Not all schools provide music courses for forms 4 to 7, even fewer for HKCEE/HKALE music curricula. For this reason, very few candidates take the examinations. Furthermore, the majority of the teachers do not possess adequate in-service training to teach the syllabi, thus they will not teach the HKCEE/HKALE music courses. Also music being neglected by schools is another reason.”
6. “Academic subjects for students are already too heavy. Music lessons are not enough and students’ musical knowledge is generally low.”

When asked if the HKALE music curriculum links with the university music curriculum in Hong Kong, 14 said “Yes”, 6 “No”, 12 “Not Sure” and 1 did not respond. In total 23 agreed that reform should be enforced in Hong Kong secondary school music education, 7 had no opinion, 1 said “No” and 2 did not respond. These reflect the situation secondary school music teachers are facing - the difficulties on teaching the HKCEE/HKALE music courses. Although the teachers suggest that in-service training is important, they doubt if a reform of the subject is necessary.

Teachers who replied with suggestions for a good secondary school music curriculum are presented in section 8.2 – A Sound Music Curriculum.

Suggestions for the 6 research statements are as follows (Appendix IX):

### 6.3.2 Teachers: Table II – Responses for the 6 Research Statements

1) “Music education can assist the students’ whole person development.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
19	13	1	0	0
57.6%	39.4%	3%	0%	0%

97% teachers who replied agree that music education can assist the students’ whole person development.

2) “HKCEE/HKALE music curricula match the musical learning abilities of the general secondary school students.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	9	6	12	5
3%	27.3%	18.2%	36.4%	15.1%

About 50% teachers disagree that HKCEE/HKALE music curricula match the musical learning abilities of the general secondary school students. 33.3% show no comment about this.

3) “HKCEE/HKALE music curricula can enhance the personal development of the students.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	13	11	4	4
3%	39.4%	33.3%	12.1%	12.1%

Whether HKCEE/HKALE music curricula can enhance the personal development of the students is questionable.

- 4) “HKCEE/HKALE music curricula reflect Hong Kong social characteristics and local culture.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
0	5	9	13	6
0%	15.1%	27.3%	39.4%	18.2%

Over half teachers who replied disagree that HKCEE/HKALE music curricula reflect Hong Kong social characteristics and local culture.

- 5) “The Curriculum Development Council suggested that from the year 2005, arts education should be included in the senior secondary curriculum: one to two hour lessons per week with 5% proportionate to the whole curriculum.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6	20	6	1	0
18.2%	60.6%	18.2%	3%	0%

Arts Education is supported.

- 6) “Arts Education Committee suggested that, based on point five above, from the year 2002 new Arts Education should be introduced in primary and junior secondary schools, 1/8 proportionate to the whole curriculum.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6	20	6	1	0
18.2%	60.6%	18.2%	3%	0%

Arts Education is supported.

#### **6.4 Influential Persons in the Field: the Report of the Interviews**

From the pilot study and the completed questionnaires, the person most commonly mentioned as influential in the field was Dr. CHAM Lai Shuk-ching. Although some other persons were also mentioned, these people are not directly linked with the field of music education at secondary schools in Hong Kong (e.g. they are conductors or composers).

Furthermore, Dr. Cham recommended the researcher to approach the Centralized Scheme secondary schools for which the list of names was provided under her assistance. It was hoped that, instead of sending the questionnaires to secondary schools randomly, these target schools were more precise and focused for this research. It was also expected that it would gain a higher response rate feedback with more effective and representative results. In addition, Dr. Cham introduced another professional in the field to the researcher – the Subject Officer of Arts Education, Mr. YU Sui-tak. Also, the researcher successfully contacted a secondary school music teacher by telephone for an interview (Mr. Siu, who left his phone number on the replied questionnaire for further contact purpose). The following is the summary report of the relevant interviews. The method adopted was a semi-structured interview (section 5.3.2) which aimed at probing more deeply and open-ended questions for

collecting more complicated data, such as education research like this study.

#### Interview with Dr. Cham

Dr. Cham pointed out that the education system in Hong Kong is examination oriented, thus a supplementary subject like music attracts a small number of candidates although HKCEE music examination will not be cancelled in the coming years (while the Hong Kong Examination Authority did consider that HKALE music examination probably should be cancelled to save money).

Dr. Cham pointed out that music education has survived both in classrooms and as an extra-curricular activity. Music at school is recreational rather than academic. Its value for students' personal development should not be neglected. On the other hand, to achieve the goal of Arts Education, different arts forms tend to be approached (i.e. music, drama, dance and media arts).

The reformed Arts Education being introduced in 2005 has not been confirmed yet. Meanwhile, the 2004 HKCEE/HKALE music syllabi remain the same. (Full details of the interviews questions: appendix X)

#### Interview with Mr. Yu

Mr. Yu suggested that the HKALE music examination is complicated as the pieces set for the syllabus are usually rare and difficult. Alternative examination boards like ABRSM are far more popular. However, the Music Section should keep the examination to smooth its decline. The following are the numbers of HKCEE and HKALE music candidates, 1998 to 2002, provided by Mr. Yu:

Year	HKCEE	HKALE	HKASLE	A Level (total)
1998	231	7	11	18
1999	205	18	18	36
2000	243	15	26	41
2001	205	14	15	29
2002	242	21	20	41

Mr. Yu believes that the Centralized Scheme will be removed in the near future. As a result, the survival of the HKCEE/HKALE music examination is doubtful. Good communication between schools, CDC and ED becomes very important. On the other hand, the prospect of Arts Education being promoted in 2005 seems to reflect the problem that teachers' professional knowledge can hardly ever cover all the teaching areas. (Full details of the interview questions: appendix X)

#### Telephone Interview with Mr. Siu

Mr. Siu has been teaching music at a secondary school over ten years, from form one to form three only. His main reason for not teaching HKCEE/HKALE music courses is that the principal gives the priority to employing other important subject teachers rather than a second music teacher. This is a typical case for the situation in Hong Kong secondary schools. (Full details of the interview questions: appendix X)

In the next section, gives an account of her exploration of the findings of the questionnaires and interviews by a visit to music classroom in a secondary school.



## **6.5 Observation: a Visit to the Music Classroom in a Secondary School – with the Feedback of the HKCEE / HKALE Students**

Before visiting the target school the researcher had, firstly, to find out which schools prepare and enter their students for the HKCEE/HKALE music examinations; secondly, to draw from the feedback from the questionnaires for school principals and music teachers (section 6.1) and refine the questions for the students to make sure that the questions are clear for them to understand, so that their responses would be useful; and then thirdly, to obtain the permission of the school's principal for the visit and arrange a convenient time with the students.

The researcher was invited to teach at a secondary school (Pooi To Middle School a girl's school founded in 1887) as a substitute music teacher by the principal from 4<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> September 2002 (when the researcher sent the questionnaire to the school principal). This school does not provide music at form 5. Form 6 students are taught by another music teacher (who teaches Mathematics at the school as well). Thus the researcher met the classes of form 1 to 4 and form 7 only. Although the school does not enter candidates for HKCEE/HKALE music examinations, the school list provided by the CDI shows that this school has students who attend the Centralized Scheme. These are the findings:

### **A) Classroom Observation: about Students**

The researcher finds that;

1. Students who attended the Centralized Scheme did not sit for the examination.
2. Students use a music book in the classroom called *Secondary School Music* (Hong Kong Music Publisher, 2001, edited by the Editorial Board, Hong Kong Music

Publisher). Book I is for form 1 and form 2, book II is for form 3 and form 4, and book III is for form 6 and form 7. Form 5 students do not have any music lessons.

3. Generally speaking, students show low or even no interest in using *Secondary School Music*. Rather, they prefer to sing and listen to pop music or songs they know well (e.g. “Dol-re-mi” and Canton-pop songs) and especially the songs they encounter in daily life (e.g. T.V., CD and radio).
4. Students love creative activities (e.g. designing a 15-20 second advertisement with rhyme or song). Thus they can express their feeling and thoughts freely.
5. Students treat music lessons as a happy time to share and relax.
6. Students’ learning intention can be stimulated by encouragement, praise, and being given freedom to do what they are able to do.
7. Students love autonomy. For example, give some significant and simple guidelines then ask the students to do the following steps on their own: for example, introduce the simple beats and ask them to choose a flash-card with simple rhythm printed on, then let them clap on their own).
8. Students tend to find the traditional music lesson boring because teachers are in the habit of teaching what they learnt a number of years ago. This does not fit the students today and is not interesting for them.

#### B) Classroom Observation: about Teachers

The researcher noticed that:

1. Music teachers may feel strange and uncomfortable because the music room is sometimes shared with other subject teachers if necessary. For example, for meeting and activities.

2. During the school examination period, music lessons are usually being borrowed or taken by other major subject teachers.
3. Music teachers usually feel isolated and lonely, although they also enjoy the autonomy.
4. The music teacher is usually loved by students because usually there is no examination.
5. Usually the music teachers are also loved and respected by their colleagues because of their professional image, and because their subject is isolated at school. Thus it is not in competition with other subjects seen as much more academic.

C) Classroom Observation: Students' Ideal Secondary School Music Teacher

1. Should be good at singing and piano playing. Not lazy, not with a dull personality, and active, aggressive, effective and hard working.
2. Always encourage students to bring their favorite CDs to the class to listen, learn and share.
3. Teachers should always smile and understand what students want and think.
4. Teachers should respect students (e.g. ask what their ideas are). Be frank, all-round and professional at music (e.g. know how to compose and know the music of different countries).
5. Always encourage students and sing with students in the class.
6. Teachers should make students love them and they should love students as well.
7. With a sweet and good voice. Be patient and always love to share with students (e.g. sing and dance with students).
8. Be well educated, gentle, nice and beautiful / handsome.
9. Do not blame the students when they make mistakes.

10. Should be up-to-date (i.e. dress in good taste and be fashionable).
11. Introduce pop music in the class.
12. Use simple words with clear presentation, with an open-mind; humorous; always with fun and friendly.
13. Looks like a super-star.

D) Classroom Observation: Students' Ideal Secondary School Music Lesson

1. Students are permitted to laugh and shout in the class when they feel happy and excited.
2. With more musical games shared in the class.
3. Encourage students to perform.
4. There should be singing and playing.
5. Students can sing the songs they love.
6. Students are encouraged to play different instruments in the class. There should never be a dull moment.
7. No theory learning (some students find it uninteresting and difficult).
8. Do not only follow the teaching book and do the exercises on it.
9. Class activities should be diversified.
10. Learning from playing.
11. Activity-oriented.
12. Students can learn composing and song writing – thus their musical potential and ability can be cultivated.
13. The class atmosphere should be happy and playful.
14. No music examinations.
15. Give some freedom to the students to do some creative activities.

16. Open and liberal. Teachers should always introduce some new idea and feel comfortable with it.
17. Students are encouraged to do what they like.
18. There should be less classical music and more pop music.

In addition, there are also some observations that the researcher made during her days at Pooi To Middle School:

E) Classroom Observation: other Findings

The researcher finds that:

1. It is always a challenge for the music teacher to design a continuous and systematic course because students have different musical abilities and aptitudes.
2. Even if the class activity is interesting, students may still feel no interest or lack of mood to participate in the activity. For example, they may just have had a P>E. lesson and feel tired; or there may be bad weather on that day.
3. Even if the students are not actively involved in the activity, they may still love the teachers.
4. A difficult course would make students feel strange and lose interest.
5. Students love the teacher if the teacher treats students as her friends.
6. The best effect of a music lesson is that students do not want to leave the music room, and they ask for more activities.
7. Teachers can always learn something new from the students (e.g. trends in pop music, imagination and creativity).

The researcher asked the HKCEE/HKALE students to fill in the questionnaires. In

total 72 HKCEE and 62 HKALE students replied. These are going to be described in the following section.

## **6.6 The Report of the HKCEE Student Questionnaires**

None of the 72 HKCEE students studied HKCEE music in the school. The reasons give are that an HKCEE music course is not provided in the school (40); other subjects are thought to be more important (32); and they are not interested in the HKCEE music examination (24) (more than one reason is acceptable). Other reasons include:

### Reasons for not Taking HKCEE Music as School

1. “I do not know music.”
2. “The examination is too difficult.”
3. “I do not have spare time to study HKCEE music.”
4. “Our school does not provide the HKCEE music course: it only provides the application form for us to enter the examination.”

When asked if the students are learning music outside school, 48 answered “No” and 22 said “Yes” (which include piano, theory, violin, singing, guitar, bass guitar, and electric guitar lessons). 2 did not answer. Following are the responses to the items in the questionnaire designed to test the 5 null hypotheses:

### 6.6.1 HKCEE Students: Table O – Responses for the 5 Null Hypotheses

- 1) “The declining entries of HKCEE and HKALE music examinations is not a matter for concern.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
12	38	20	2	0
16.7%	52.8%	27.8%	2.8%	0%

About 70% students agree that the declining entries of HKCEE and HKALE music examination is a matter for concern.

- 2) “The present Hong Kong secondary school music curriculum does not require any change.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
8	24	26	12	2
11.1%	33.3%	36.1%	16.7%	2.8%

44.4% students disagree that the present Hong Kong secondary school music curriculum does not require any change.

- 3) “Music education has no value for the balance of Hong Kong secondary school curriculum.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
10	36	20	2	2
14.3%	51.4%	28.6%	2.8%	2.8%

Remark: 2 did not respond

About 66% students agree that music has its value.

- 4) “In-service training is not necessary for Hong Kong secondary school music teachers.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
16	40	12	2	2
22.2%	55.6%	16.7%	2.8%	2.8%

About 80% students support the in-service training for Hong Kong secondary school music teachers.

- 5) “The model of future music education in Hong Kong should not include Chinese traditional music.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
16	34	20	2	0
22.2%	47.2%	27.8%	2.8%	0%

About 70% students support the idea that the model of future music education in Hong Kong should include Chinese traditional music.

When asked who is/are the influential person(s) in Hong Kong music education, some figures are suggested: yo-yo MA (cello player), Sze-kuan LAU (pianist), James WONG (Canton-pop writer) and “primary and secondary schools music teachers.”

The reasons for very few candidates participating in the music examinations are as follows.



### Reasons for not Taking the HKCEE/HKALE Music Examinations

1. "We have no spare time."
2. "We do not know much about music and have no confidence to take the examinations. Also we do not know the contents of the syllabi."
3. "The examinations are difficult."
4. "We do not have interest / talent in it."
5. "The subjects / examinations are not provided in the school."
6. "The subject is no popular."
7. "To the majority of the people, music is a fun subject, not an important one."
8. "Music is not important, supportive and practical for our future career."
9. "We do not even know that music is one of the subjects at the HKCEE examination."
10. "If without musical training, it is impossible for candidates to study and understand the contents of syllabi in only two years."
11. "Schools do not treat music as an important subject. Candidates cannot gain good marks in the examination."
12. "As music is an extra-curricular subject and few Hong Kong people would like to develop their career in this field, Hong Kong music development is not an ideal model. Many music lovers would prefer to study music abroad."
13. "The examinations are too difficult. The marks given even for grade 8 piano qualification are very low (i.e. 15/100). Candidates will prefer to take an internationally recognized music examination."

When asked if reform should be enforced in Hong Kong secondary school music education, 38 had no opinion, 26 chose "Yes", 6 said "No" and 2 made no response.

To the point of view of the HKCEE students who replied, the characteristics of a good secondary school music curriculum are:

1. "Should be fun and happy."
2. "More pop music, less theory training."
3. "With musical games. Students can play different types of instruments."
4. "With Karaoke and with jazz music."
5. "Do not only follow the teaching book."
6. "Provide some musical training, but not too difficult."
7. "Be interesting. For example, a mixture of Western, Chinese and pop song singing."
8. "With a balanced development, Should be diversified."
9. "Not only singing and written examination (e.g. to introduce Italian opera and musical drama for appreciation). Be a all-round learning, but general study in-depth only."
10. "To arrange students to enjoy musical drama at public concert halls."
11. "To learn song writing. Students should have opportunities to develop creativity ability because music is an arts subject."

To test the six statements of this research (appendix IX), the opinions of the replied HKCEE students are as follows:

### 6.6.2 HKCEE Students: Table II – Responses for the 6 Research Statements

1) “Music education can assist the student’s whole person development.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
8	46	16	2	0
11.1%	63.9%	22%	3%	0 %

75% HKCEE who replied students agree that music education can assist the students’ whole person development.

2) “HKCEE/HKALE music curricula match the musical learning abilities of the general secondary school students.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4	24	32	10	2
5.6%	33.3%	44.4%	13.9%	3 %

Whether HKCEE/HKALE music curricula match the musical learning abilities of the general secondary school students is doubtful.

3) “HKCEE/HKALE music curricula can enhance the personal development of the students.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
8	42	18	4	0
11.1%	58%	25%	5.6%	0 %

About 70% students who replied agree that the music curricula can help the personal development of the students.

- 4) “HKCEE/HKALE music curricula reflect Hong Kong social characteristics and local culture.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10	30	20	10	2
13.9%	42%	28%	13.9%	3 %

Over 50% students agree that the curricula do reflect Hong Kong social characteristics and local culture.

- 5) “The Curriculum Development Council suggested that from the year 2005, Arts Education should be included in the senior secondary curriculum: one to two hour lessons per week with 5% proportionate to the whole curriculum.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
2	20	24	22	4
3%	28%	33.3%	30.6%	5.6 %

The Largest group among the respondents feel uncertainty about the coming Arts Education curriculum.

- 6) “Arts Education Committee suggested that, based on point five above, from the year 2002 new arts education should be introduced in primary and junior secondary schools, 1/8 proportionate to the whole curriculum.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
2	24	34	12	2
3%	33.3%	47%	17%	3 %

About half the student number replied with no comment. On the other hand, there are some further comments provided:

#### Further Suggestions Provided by HKCEE Students

1. “Music is important to all people – it can polish people’s disposition to become more cultural.
2. “Music lessons are mainly singing lessons. They lack practical music training.”
3. “There should be more Chinese music training.”
4. “We do not like traditional Chinese music.”
5. “Academic pressure for HKCEE candidates is already very heavy. Music is being neglected.”
6. “Promotion of music education at secondary schools in Hong Kong is not enough.”
7. “The present music curriculum is dull and not interesting. It cannot help develop students’ musical ability.”
8. “Arts Education sounds more interesting than music education.”
9. “Hong Kong lacks local characteristic music (it is mainly influenced by Japanese and Western music).”

The following section explores the feedback of the HKALE student questionnaires.

### **6.7 The Report of the HKALE Student Questionnaires**

All 62 HKALE students who replied do not take the music course at the school. The reasons are that HKALE music course is not provided at the school (52); they are not interested in HKALE music examination (20); other subjects are more important

(18) [more than one is acceptable]. Other reasons include “We do not have fundamental musical training” and “We are not good at music”. On the other hand, 50 HKALE students who replied do not learn music outside school and 12 do so (which include piano, singing, and Chinese instrument. Some students attended the Summer music campus at HK Chinese University as well). To test the 5 null hypotheses, the findings are that (appendix IX):

### 6.7.1 HKALE Students: Table I – Responses for the 5 Null Hypotheses

- 1) “The declining entries of HKCEE and HKALE music examinations is not a matter for concern.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
12	32	17	1	0
19.4%	51.6%	27.4%	1.6%	0%

71% students disagree that the declining entries of HKCEE and HKALE music examinations is not a matter for concern.

- 2) “The present Hong Kong secondary school music curriculum does not require any change.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
12	36	9	5	0
19.4%	58.1%	14.5%	8%	0%

77.5% students who replied support that the present Hong Kong secondary school music curriculum require a change.

3) “Music education has no value for the balance of Hong Kong secondary school curriculum.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
16	28	8	10	0
25.8%	45.2%	12.9%	16.1%	0%

71% students disagree that music education has no value for the balance of Hong Kong secondary school curriculum.

4) “In-service training is not necessary for Hong Kong secondary school music teachers.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
26	28	8	0	0
41.9%	45.2%	12.9%	0%	0%

87.1% students support in-service training for Hong Kong secondary school music teachers.

5) “The model of future music education in Hong Kong should not include Chinese traditional music.”

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
22	36	4	0	0
35.5%	58%	6.5%	0%	0%

93.5% students agree that the model of future music education in Hong Kong should include Chinese traditional music.

To conclude, the above findings reflect that the majority HKALE students who replied think that the declining entries of HKCEE and HKALE music examinations is a matter for concern. They prefer a change of the curricula because music education is important. Thus in-service training for music teachers is necessary. In response to the question of who is / are the influential persons in Hong Kong music education, several names are mentioned: Yo-yo MA (cellist); Wing-sze YIP (conductor); James WONG (Canton pop song-writer); Won-di LEE (pianist); Alan TAM (pop singer); Chi-cheung LAM (pop singer); and “the Director of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council.

The following are the reasons that HKALE students suggest why there so few candidates participate HKCEE/HKALE music examinations:

HKALE Students: Reasons for not Taking HKCEE/HKALE Music Examinations

1. “Most students do not understand music.”
2. “The development of the subject depends on personal aptitude and interest.”
3. “The majority of students usually do not plan to study music at University.”
4. “Music is a minority subject.”
5. “Our school does not provide the courses.”
6. “Other subjects are much more important.”
7. “Music lessons at school are too few. There is no time to prepare for the examination.”
8. “The relevant information about music examinations for students is not enough.”
9. “Usually schools do not treat music as a subject.”
10. “Music examinations are not encouraged in the schools.”



11. "Promotion of music education at secondary schools in Hong Kong is not enough."
12. "Students do not have any interest in taking the music examination because it is not useful for their future."
13. "Music is not emphasized in Hong Kong schools and the academic curriculum is already too heavy for students. There is no space to develop music in the schools."
14. "The examinations are not useful for students' future career, and they are not linked to tertiary music courses."
15. "The Hong Kong government does not encourage / support music workers which depresses the public's interest in music writing."

When asked if the HKALE music curriculum has links with the university music curriculum in Hong Kong, 47 chose "Not Sure", 9 chose "Yes" and 6 chose "No".

The reason for "No" are that: 1) "Musical knowledge at secondary school level is too simple." 2) "Beyond music, other subjects at University are more important for the students." 35 HKALE students replied that reform should be enforced in Hong Kong secondary school music education and 27 expressed no opinion about the reform. On the other hand, ideas about a good secondary school music curriculum are that:

#### HKALE Students: Factors for Making a Good Secondary School Music Curriculum

1. "With Karaoke."
2. "Creative learning."
3. "It should be interesting."
4. "More pop music in the class."
5. "With different types of music."

6. “Diversified. With a balanced curriculum.”
7. “Music examination should be canceled.”
8. “Learning from playing musical games.”
9. “Japanese and Korean pop music should be included.”
10. “It should be a mixture of both Chinese and Western music.”
11. “It should be arranged for students to enjoy musical dramas at public city halls.”
12. “Each student should learn at least one musical instrument.”
13. “The contents of the music curriculum should be diversified and practical.”
14. “Introduce the changes of music (i.e. history) from the ancient times to modern.”
15. “Each student can choose any item they want to learn (e.g. composing or singing).”
16. “To provide opportunities for the students to do creative activities, to play different kinds of musical instruments with more theory training and with fun.”

Following is the feedback of the HKALE students for the 6 statements (Appendix IX):

### 6.7.2 HKALE Students: Table II – Responses for the 6 Research Statements

1) “Music education can assist the students’ whole person development.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
15	43	2	2	0
24.2%	69.4%	3.2%	3.2%	0 %

93.6% students support the idea that music education can assist the students’ whole person development.

- 2) “HKCEE/HKALE music curricula match the musical learning abilities of the general secondary school students.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
0	8	27	21	6
0%	12.9%	43.5%	33.9%	9.7 %

Only 12.9% students agree that HKCEE/HKALE music curricula match the musical learning abilities of the general secondary school students

- 3) “HKCEE/HKALE music curricula can enhance the personal development of the students.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
14	24	17	5	2
22.6%	38.7%	27.4%	8.1%	3.2%

61.3% students agree that HKCEE/HKALE music curricula can enhance the personal development of the students.

- 4) “HKCEE/HKALE music curricula reflect Hong Kong social characteristics and local culture.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
14	24	17	5	2
22.6%	38.7%	27.4%	8.1%	3.2%

Only 24.2% students agree that HKCEE/HKALE music curricula reflect Hong Kong social characteristics and local culture.

- 5) “The Curriculum Development Council suggested that from the year 2005, Arts Education should be included in senior secondary curriculum: one to two hour lessons per week with 5% proportionate to the whole curriculum.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9	36	8	3	6
14.5%	58.1%	12.9%	4.8%	9.7%

72.6% students support the CDC’s suggestion.

- 6) “Arts Education Committee suggested that, based on point five above, from the year 2002 new arts education should be introduced in primary and junior secondary schools, 1/8 proportionate to the whole curriculum.”

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
7	31	20	2	2
11.3%	50%	32.3%	3.2%	3.2%

61.3% students support the suggestion.

To conclude, the above findings show that over 90% HKALE students who replied support the idea that music education can assist the student’s whole person development. Although about half the students are not sure whether the HKCEE/HKALE music curricula match the musical learning abilities of the general secondary schools students, and doubt if the curricula reflect Hong Kong social characteristics and local culture, over 60% students think that the curricula still has value for their personal development. In addition, the majority HKALE students who replied think that HKCEE/HKALE music curricula do not match the musical learning

abilities of the general secondary school students. Also the majority support the coming Arts Education curriculum. Other comments provided:

1. "Music lesson is a lesson for relaxation."
2. "Arts education can enhance students' disposition."
3. "Chinese people should know more about Chinese music."
4. "Some secondary school music teachers are musically talented but not good at teaching."
5. "The knowledge of different kinds of musical instruments should be introduced more."
6. "Music education can release the pressure on students' and enhance personal disposition."
7. "The present HKCEE/HKALE music syllabi are very dull and out-dated. Not suitable for the youngsters."
8. "Music is also a professional subject. Thus the declining entry of HKCEE/HKALE music examinations is a matter for concern."
9. "In-service training is very important for secondary school music teachers or they cannot teach new things to the new generation."
10. "Hong Kong is a part of China already. Thus Chinese music should be maintained in the music syllabi."
11. "Music education has its value for the balance of Hong Kong secondary school curriculum because not all students have chance to learn music outside school."
12. "Hong Kong students are usually too passive on learning. Music teachers at secondary schools are not always professional. Music lessons at school are too

few. Students concentrated only on studying other academic subjects. Music is being neglected.”

## **6.8 A Comparison with the New 2009 Syllabus**

Ten years is a short period of development in education. However, between 1998 and 2008 there are hot debating discussions on the subject of music education at secondary schools in Hong Kong. However, the relevant suggestions had been turned down. The researcher decided to wait for the final outcome until the relevant syllabus was finalized and published in July, 2009.

Not surprisingly, after seven years’ hot debate, except a number of examining pieces are replaced (appendix XI, p. 252 – 255), the HKCEE music examination syllabus remains unchanged again (since 2005) for the coming year of 2010. On the other hand, the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) music syllabus was cancelled (appendix XI).

In addition, the relevant supporting governmental document for the new 2010 (HKCEE) music exam is provided (appendix XI). The main points emerging from this document will be studied in the next section.

## **6.9 Supporting Document: Arts Education Key Learning Area – Music Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4 – 6) [AEKLA, Music]**

The document (in total with 95 pages) was jointly prepared by the CDC (Curriculum Development Council) and the HKEAA (Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority) which is published in 2007. It is recommended for use in schools by the Education and Manpower Bureau HKSARG (Hong Kong Special Administration Region Government) (front page, the document, appendix XIII).

Remain unchanged, the curriculum consists of Compulsory and Elective Parts:

(Appendix XIII, 2007: 7)

Remain unchanged, the 2007 AEKLA document emphasizes the importance of music as a part of Arts Education which suggests that there are nine learning objectives and students should learn:

- i) To develop critical listening skills and understand how music elements are used in compositional devices.
- ii) To identify and respond critically to the music genres and styles of different cultures and periods, and express understanding and personal views on the music.
- iii) To analyses the artistic qualities of diverse music genres and styles in relation to their historical and cultural contexts
- iv) To perform music accurately and fluently with appropriate control over technique and expression.
- v) To perform different types of music using appropriate styles to demonstrate the ability to interpret music and the development of aesthetic sensitivity.
- vi) To discuss, explain and defend a personal interpretation of the music being performed.
- vii) To create and develop music ideas employing appropriate compositional devices.
- viii) To arrange existing music to demonstrate creativity and musical understanding of the original piece.
- ix) To discuss and explain the use of music element in compositional devices of their compositions.

(Appendix X, 2007: 8 - 10).



## **6.10 Summary of this Chapter**

In this chapter, feedback from the targeted secondary school principals, music teachers, students and representative persons in the field has been collected and reported. The evaluation of the overall findings is going to be the subject of the following chapter.

## **Chapter 7 Analysis of Findings and Discussion**

### **7.1 Evaluation of the Overall Findings**

The findings of this research are summarized in eight statements:

- 1) HKCEE/HKALE music syllabi are too wide and difficult.
- 2) Secondary school principal's support is important to the subject's development.
- 3) Music teachers face a number of limitations.
- 4) Students' interest is relatively low.
- 5) Resources are lacking (e.g. textbooks and instruments).
- 6) Music as a school subject is highly neglected in secondary schools in Hong Kong.
- 7) Music will probably be further neglected as a part of Arts Education.
- 8) Music is usually considered as a leisure activity rather than an academic subject.

There is no university in Hong Kong providing specific courses for HKCEE/HKALE music syllabi.

These points will now be explained in detail.

#### **1) HKCEE/HKALE music syllabi are too wide and difficult.**

This statement is supported by:

- a) Section 3.1.2 - HKCEE/HKALE music syllabi. It was found that both Western and Chinese music culture are included in the syllabi. The contents are wide and long in examination duration – 4 hours and 40 minutes for the HKCEE and over 8 hours for the HKALE music examinations.

b) Section 6.3 – The Report of the Questionnaires: Secondary School Music Teachers:

14 out of 33 teachers who replied agree that the curriculum is too wide, difficult and impractical. Some further ideas concerning this issue include: “The courses are too wide and students have to be very good at both languages, English and Chinese.” And “Music examination is difficult which does not match the ability of the majority of students. The majority of secondary schools do not provide HKCEE music courses and music courses are provided only at junior level in some schools.”

c) Section 6.6 – The Report of the HKCEE Student Questionnaires: Some students reported that the examination is too difficult.

d) Section 6.7 – The Report of the HKALE Student Questionnaires: The response is simple and direct – 52 out of 62 HKALE students reported that HKALE music course is not provided at the school. Further idea include: “The present HKCEE/HKALE music syllabi are very dull and out-dated. Not suitable for the youngsters.”

**2) Secondary school principal’s support is important to the subject’s development.**

This statement is supported by:

a) Section 4.3.2 – The Importance of School Principals’ Support on School Music Teachers: “Secondary school music teachers, generally, may appear to doubt the value of their work in the classroom. Leadership and administrative style of the school principals is crucial because this can give the school an outstanding and distinctive character...if the principal thinks that music education is important and should be encouraged, it usually results in a comparatively higher

level of achievement in the subject.”

- b) Section 6.2 – The Report of the Questionnaires: Secondary School Principals: The majority of the secondary schools do not provide HKCEE/HKALE music curricula although 97.6% principals who replied agree that music education has its value for the balance of the Hong Kong secondary school curriculum. Usually music education is encouraged at schools, but not the HKCEE/HKALE music curricula; their students neither are encouraged to attend the examinations.
- c) Section 6.3 – The Report of the Questionnaires: Secondary School Music Teachers: Some teachers point out that time allocation for the subject at schools is not enough and that it is being neglected although none of the teachers who replied think that music education has no value for the balance of the Hong Kong secondary school curriculum. It is found that the majority of secondary schools do not provide music lessons at the level of forms 4 and 5.
- d) Section 6.4 – Influential Persons in the Field: the Report of the Interviews: Dr. Cham points out that school time table has its space for students to learn music and students make the decision to take the examination or not. The basic image of music as a school subject is as recreational rather than academic (appendix X). Thus it is understood that school principals’ support for the development of the subject at school is important.

### **3) Music teachers face a number of limitations.**

This statement is supported by:

- a) Section 3.3.8.7 – In-Service Training for Secondary School Music Teachers (S.S.M.C., section 3.5): Teachers felt that in-service training should be give on

computer/computer music; music education technology; composition; Chinese music; teaching methodology and chorus conducting.

- b) Section 6.2 – The Report of the Questionnaires: Secondary School Principals: The majority of secondary schools in Hong Kong do not provide HKCEE/HKALE music curricula.
- c) Section 6.3 – The Report of the Questionnaires: Secondary School Music Teachers: Teaching books and reference books are insufficient. Students' musical ability varies widely and the curriculum is too wide, difficult and impractical.
- d) Sections 6.6 and 6.7 – The Reports of the HKCEE/HKALE Students: The majority of the students do not treat music as an important subject. It is usually for leisure and relaxation.

**4) Students' interest is relatively low.**

This statement is supported by:

- a) Section 6.2 – The Report of the Questionnaires: Secondary School Principals: Very few students apply for the subject and take the examination.
- b) Section 6.3 – The Report of the Questionnaires: Secondary School Music Teachers: The aptitude and interest of the students is comparatively low.
- c) Section 6.5 – Observation: a Visit to the Music Classroom in a Secondary School with the Feedback of the HKCEE/HKALE Students: Students tend to find the traditional music lessons boring because teachers usually to teach what they learnt a number of years ago. This does not fit the students today and is not interesting for them.
- d) Section 6.7 – The Report of the HKALE Student Questionnaires: Usually most of

the HKALE students concentrate on academic subjects and are not interested in the HKALE music examination.

**5) Lack of resources (e.g. textbooks and instruments).**

This statement is supported by:

Section 3.3.8.3 – Teaching Resources for Secondary Music Classroom (S.S.M.C., section 2.3): The average number of musical instruments and music textbooks provided in secondary schools is very small.

**6) Music as a school subject is being highly neglected in secondary schools in Hong Kong.**

This statement is supported by points 1 to 5 mentioned above.

**7) Music will probably be further neglected as a part of Arts Education.**

This statement is supported by:

- a) Section 4.2.1 – Lessons learned from the Arts Education introduced in Brazil in 1971: the Context of Music Education: “The situation has deteriorated during these years (three decades) to a point where nowadays only a few schools, most of them private, offer music education as a separate subject, or offer some extra-curricular activities such as choirs or instrumental groups.”
- b) Section 4.2.2 – The Prospective Suggestions on Arts Education in Hong Kong: Based on a U.K. Research Report on Arts Education in Secondary School: When the survey in Brazil and the report in U.K. and Wales are compared, similar findings are that music as a school subject at secondary schools attracts few students to take it academically and seriously music as a part of Arts Education

results in a comparative highly neglected status; and development of music in Arts Education is very difficult.

- 8) Music is usually considered as a leisure activity rather than an academic subject. There is no university in Hong Kong providing specific courses for HKCEE/HKALE music syllabi.**

This statement is supported by: Section 2.5.5 – The Conflicts Occur in Secondary School Music Curriculum in Hong Kong – and Music Curricula not being linked with Local Tertiary Education: Music teachers are usually not being trained for these music curricula. On the other hand, the main problems in setting up the Arts curriculum in the secondary schools are resources, support from the school principals, and teachers' in-service training.

#### Differences between the Different Groups Under Survey

The most outstanding difference found in this study is that secondary school music teachers and their subject – music – have long been neglected though its value to the development of the whole person of the students is not questioned. On the other hand, the deeper significance of this situation explores the real dilemma that, the influence of education policy and curriculum reform on music as a school subject at secondary school level in Hong Kong is very weak. Course content remains the same after hot debate and huge workload as a huge amount of work was been put into the proposed reform. Furthermore, the subject is likely to become more marginal in the new coming Arts Education curriculum (sections 2.3, 3.3.6, 3.3.8, 4.2 and 5.9).

The findings and theories of this study based on the above information are going to be presented next.

## **7.2 Findings and Theories**

Based on the information found above, there are five findings for this research:

### Findings:

- 1) There is a significant relationship between the recognition of a school subject and the number of candidates entered (sections 1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.4, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4).
- 2) The very small number of HKCEE/HKALE music candidates is not a concern for the general public in Hong Kong because taking these examinations is not necessary for students' future development in the field (sections 6.1 to 6.4).
- 3) HKCEE/HKALE music students have another more promising and recognized choice: i.e. the ABRSM/TCL examinations provide internationally recognized music certificates (sections. 6.1 to 6.4).
- 4) The other reason for much more candidates participating in the ABRSM/TCL examinations are that the areas covered are more focused and concise (i.e. instrumental playing, aural tests, scales and arpeggios, and sight-reading) and much shorter in examination time duration (usually between 10 to 30 minutes). But as a school subject, HKCEE/HKALE music examinations are too wide in content including both Chinese and Western music with long examinations (4 hours and 40 minutes for HKCEE and over 8 hours for HKALE) (sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.3).
- 5) A promising music syllabus should meet the general ability of the majority of students which matches their social backgrounds and age. Otherwise, music



teachers may not follow the syllabi and do not encourage the students to take the examination (section 6.3).

### Theories

Based on the reports of the questionnaires and interviews (sections 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6 and 6.7), five theories established for the survey are that:

- 1) A too wide and difficult syllabus can limit the development of a school subject, especially if it is optional, not compulsory.
- 2) Even if the syllabus is too wide and difficult, the number of candidates may still be high if the subject is important, compulsory and only one examination board is provided (e.g. HKCEE/HKALE Chinese, English and Mathematics examinations in Hong Kong).
- 3) If at least one more music examination board is provided for HKCEE/HKALE music candidates (as there are a number of different examination boards in U.K.), candidates can make a comparison and choose. Thus the development of music curriculum at secondary schools in Hong Kong will probably be better.
- 4) The lack of resources for the development of secondary school music curriculum in Hong Kong may simply reflect the scarcity of research specifically related in this field.

Not many pupils are interested in music and being musically trained. Thus music as a school subject has its difficulties in developing on a school base. This is one of the major reasons why so few candidates participated in the HKCEE/HKALE music examination.

When we refer these findings and theories to the objectives of this research (section 4.4.2), we find that:

- 1) Education policy in Hong Kong plays an unimportant role in secondary school music education.
- 2) Policy makers, school principals, school music teachers, parents and students do not contribute too much effort on the development of the subject.
- 3) Tertiary music courses and secondary school music courses are not linked in Hong Kong.
- 4) The influence of the HKCEE/HKALE music syllabi on the subject's development is significant.
- 5) Music as part of the contents of the new Arts Education seems to be more neglected.

#### Findings on the Responses for the 5 Null Hypotheses

- 1) The majority of those who replied in this research agree that the declining entries of HKCEE and HKALE music examinations are a matter for concern.
- 2) The majority of those who replied agree that the present Hong Kong secondary school music curriculum requires change.
- 3) The majority of those who replied agree that music education has its value for the balance of Hong Kong secondary school curriculum.
- 4) The majority of those who replied agree that in-service training is necessary for Hong Kong secondary school music teachers.
- 5) The majority of those who replied agree that the model of future music education in Hong Kong should include Chinese traditional music.

### Key comments from the Questionnaire: Responses for the 6 Research Statement

- 1) “Music education can assist the student’s whole person development.”
- 2) “HKCEE/HKALE music curricula match the musical learning abilities of the general secondary school students.”
- 3) ““HKCEE/HKALE music curricula can enhance the personal development of the students.”
- 4) The curriculum Development Council suggested that from the year 2005, Arts Education should be included in the senior secondary curriculum: one to two hour lessons per week with 5% proportionate to the whole curriculum.”
- 5) “The Arts Education Committee suggested that, based on point five above, from the year 2002 new arts education should be introduced in primary and junior secondary schools. 1/8 proportionate to the whole curriculum.”

### **7.3 Data Analysis and a Comparison to the Results of Related Research**

#### **(comparing to section 3.3)**

It is said that data analysis is a process which involves: “...organizing, accounting for, and explaining the data; in short, making sense of the data in terms of the participants’ definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities.” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2001: 147) Based on these procedures, the following method was adopted for this research:

- 1) A pilot study was undertaken (section 5.7).
- 2) Questionnaires were sent to the target secondary school principals and music teachers (section 6.1 and 6.2).

- 3) The researcher visited the North Point Teachers' Center in Hong Kong (section 5.5.3) and undertook the fieldwork at Pooi To Middle School (section 6.5).
- 4) The researcher undertook the personal interviews (section 6.4).
- 5) Her results were reviewed and compared with relevant literature. Both official and non-official reports were presented where appropriate (section 7.3, cross-referenced to chapter 3).
- 6) The hypotheses (section 5.5) were tested after the feedback of questionnaires was received and the interviews had been undertaken (chapter 6).

#### Final Stages of Doing this Study

The research procedures at the final stages of doing this study include:

<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>
Facts	Similarities	Meanings	New Findings
Findings	Differences	Implications	Originalities
Results	Connections	Phenomenon	Solutions

(Table 7.1)

The discussion and comparison are based on previous research studies. The functions of explanation and conclusion are to distinguish the findings, disagreement and conflicts being found. To conclude, the three aims of this study (section 1.2) with the relevant findings are that:

Three Aims of the Study (section 1.3) and the Findings

	Aims	Findings
1	<p>To examine how far the HKCEE/ HKALE music curriculum in Hong Kong is a suitable basis for students.</p> <p>(Section 3.1.2 to 3.1.4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not promising.</li> <li>- It is criticized as difficult and impractical.</li> <li>- Not necessary for candidates' further education on studying music at Universities in Hong Kong.</li> <li>- ABRSM and TCL examinations are better substitutes.</li> </ul> <p>(Chapter 6)</p>
2	<p>To examine the proposed 'new' music syllabi to start in 2001.</p> <p>(Section 5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The proposal was turned down.</li> <li>- The music syllabi remain the same.</li> </ul> <p>(Sections 4.2 and 6.4)</p>
3	<p>To explore the possible alternatives in the field – Arts Education proposing in 2005.</p> <p>(Section 4.2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher professionalism and knowledge are obvious limitations.</li> <li>- The contents are very wide.</li> <li>- Music will probably be more neglected.</li> </ul> <p>(Sections 4.2.1, 4.2.2 and 6.3)</p>

(Table 7.2)

The findings of the 5 objectives (section 4.4.2) are;

Five Objectives of the Study (section 4.3.2) and the Findings

Aims	Objectives	Findings
1	To find out how education policy can affect secondary school music education in Hong Kong.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The subject is borderline and being highly neglected.</li> <li>- Direct information is hardly found.</li> </ul> <p>(Chapter 2)</p>
2	To identify the roles of policy makers, school principals, school music teachers, parents and students in the development of secondary school music education in Hong Kong.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Very limited efforts can be made. The policy was even turned down at the last moment.</li> <li>- There would be better development of the subject if music teachers do not follow the syllabi and do not enter the candidates for the examinations.</li> </ul> <p>(Chapter 6)</p>
3	To examine if tertiary music courses and secondary school music courses are linked in Hong Kong.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not linked.</li> <li>- Tertiary music courses are independent from HKCEE / HKALE music curricula.</li> </ul> <p>(Chapter 6)</p>
4	To find out the influence of HKCEE / HKALE syllabi (e.g. their design and content) to the subject's development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Very few secondary school music teachers follow the syllabi and teach the examinations.</li> <li>- Very few HKCEE / HKALE candidates.</li> </ul> <p>(Section 2.5.5; Chapter 6)</p>
5	To recommend some ideas on the Arts Education specific for the part of music.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Music will probably be more neglected.</li> <li>- It may be better if examination on Arts Education is not compulsory.</li> </ul> <p>(Chapter 7)</p>

(Table 7.3)

Suggested solutions to the 11 issues (section 4.3.1) of this study are:

	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Possible Answers</b>
1	Why is secondary school music education in Hong Kong ignored?	- Academic subjects are heavy load for the students. - Music is not important to the general public. (Sections 6.1 to 6.4)
2	Why are there so few candidates taking HKCEE/HKALE music examinations?	- The examinations are difficult and too wide in contents. - Not many students love studying music. They usually treat music as a leisure and fun activity. (Sections 6.1. to 6.4)
3	Why is taking the HKCEE/HKALE music examinations important?	The majority of pupils do not think taking the examinations is important. (Sections 6.6 to 6.7)
4	Why is this research important?	To test the research assumptions; - Education policy on a subject's development is important. (Chapter 2) - A neglected extra-curricula subject, even if it is valued and positive for students' development, still cannot be properly delivered in schools. (Chapters 2,3. and 6)
5	Who are the professional in secondary school music education in Hong Kong?	The major figures are: Dr. CHAM Lai Shuk-ching, Dr. Fanny NG Yuen-fan and Professor Paul Morris. (Sections 5.7, 6.1 and 6.4)
6	Where are the HKCEE/HKALE music teachers come from?	HKCEE/HKALE music teachers are usually not being education / trained under the HKCEE/HKALE music curricula / syllabi. (Section 6.3)





### Findings Compared to Significant Studies

#### 1) The development of music as a school subject.

The situation of the Hong Kong current secondary school curriculum is very similar to what is described in the document printed by the Scottish Education Department: “Since the First World War the position of music in the curriculum has undergone a change. From being merely a recreational subject, almost wholly confined to singing, its scope has been widened to include listening, the study of the historical development of music, and the playing of instruments.” (*Teaching of Music in Secondary Schools*, 1960:1) These were explored in section 3.1, Music Education and Component Elements of the Present Hong Kong Secondary School Music Curriculum.

#### 2) Parental support for music as an ideal extra-curricular activity.

If parents support their children to participate in musical learning, usually it is treated as an ideal extra-curricular activity: “Extra-curricular activities are programs and events, carrying no academic credit, sponsored and organized by pupils’ or students’ organizations or by the educational institution, designed to entertain, instruct, and / or provide exercise of interests and abilities, subject to some measure of control by the institution.” (Lam & Wong, 1997: 135) This phenomenon is common in Hong Kong, so that music education is developed outside school better than inside (sections 3.1, 3.3.2 and 3.3.3).

#### 3) A comparison with other significant studies.

The originality of Foo’s research (1973, section 3.3.3) is a survey on the appraisal of Secondary School Music in Hong Kong. Foo studied the characteristics of music

education at Government Secondary Schools, Government-aided Secondary Schools and Private Secondary Schools in Hong Kong. These topics are not being further examined by the researcher.

Wong's (1990, section 3.3.4) is a Ph.D. thesis about the music curriculum in the primary and secondary school in Hong Kong. The main subject of the thesis is about the training of music teachers and how their attitudes affect the subject matter of their music program (Wong, 1990:2). The status of and practices in the music curriculum before 1990 was the focus.

In the current study, the researcher focuses on the curriculum design and policy-making in the period of 1998 and 2009, with a comparison of the candidate numbers of HKCEE/HKALE music examinations and ABRSM practical music examinations.

Ng's (1997 section 3.3.6) is a study of junior secondary school music education in Hong Kong before 1997 with reference to music teachers' attitudes. Rather, the current researcher has focused on senior secondary school music education in Hong Kong in the period 1998 to 2009 with specific attention to music curriculum and policy. Thus this research is sufficiently different from Ng (1997) to be original.

The document S.S.M.C. (1998, section 3.3.8) concentrated on junior secondary school music classrooms. Teachers' qualification and resources provided in the classroom had been sorted out. The data found are not being sought in the present research because this will cause duplication of effort – usually music teachers in secondary

school teach at both junior and senior levels in Hong Kong. The researcher has avoided doing the same studies as the S.S.M.C. has already performed.

Hope's study (2002, section 4.1) was of Arts Education policy. This material was an inspiration about the prospective change of the curricula in the future. Based on this information, as well as a study of Arts Education in Brazil (1971, section 4.2.1) and the 2001 U.K. Research Report (section 4.2.2), the present researcher has suggested a number of ideas for a restructured music syllabus and recommendations for further research (chapter 8).

#### **7.4 A Comparison of the Research Results with Government Policy**

Section 2.3 examined the music education policy in secondary schools in Hong Kong (Education Commission Reports numbers 1 to 7). It found that how to identify qualified teachers is a frequently debated issue (p. 31), thus to identify qualified music teachers is also important for music education development. However, as music is ranked as a minor subject at secondary school, promotion of the HKCEE/HKALE music curricula has its limitations. For example:

- 1) most secondary schools do not provide HKCEE.HKALE music lessons;
- 2) very few students apply for the examinations;
- 3) the qualifications of the music teachers are questionable;
- 4) the music curricula are too wide and difficult;
- 5) the usefulness of the curricula is questionable;
- 6) students' musical abilities are varied; and

- 7) HKCEE/HKALE music curricula are not linked and do not match the musical learning abilities of the general secondary school students.

(Chapter 6)

In order to meet the government policy that all students should be all-round educated, it will be hard for music to survive as a school subject in the light of the obstacles raised above. Otherwise, the curricula are thought to be stressful and annoying (chapter 6). There is a gap between government policy on music education and the situation in practice (sections 2.3 and 6.4).

### **7.5 Summary of this Chapter**

Based on the above findings, the status of music in secondary school in Hong Kong can be described as endangered and marginal. As Philpott and Plummeridge say: “Music education is an enterprise that takes many forms and is provided for in a wide variety of settings; discussions relating to its justification focus almost exclusively on the issue of music as a school curriculum subject.” (Philpott and Plummeridge, 2001: 21)

Music education on a school basis and the preparation of students for the HKCEE/HKALE examinations will become the core issue of the subject’s development. Most of the teachers do not encourage their students to take the examinations. Generally speaking, the educational significance and value of music learning are beyond reasonable doubt. On the other hand, low interest of students, limited staffing and resources are consistent issues for the subject’s development in secondary schools.

The core difficulty is to promote its importance: “Consequently, music educationists seek to highlight the significance of their subject and often emphasize its possible extrinsic outcomes.” (Philpott and Plummeridge, 2001: 29) Furthermore, assessment is always difficult as music education is a personal and subjective matter which makes music a kind of aesthetic education – to do with feelings. Thus we can hardly assess the outcomes objectively (e.g. composition and musical performance). As it is neglected at schools, it is suggested, the music curriculum had reached a weak and threatened curriculum status in Hong Kong secondary schools.

In the following chapter, a suggestion for a restructured music syllabus (in Arts Education) for secondary schools in Hong Kong is going to be examined.

## **Chapter 8 Conclusions, Recommendations and Final Comments**

Based on the feedback of the questionnaires (sections 6.2, 6.3, and 6.7) and interviews (section 6.4), the researcher proposes that a promising secondary school music syllabus should possess the following characteristics:

### **8.1 A Promising Learning Circumstances**

- 1) Syllabus: The contents should not be too wide. Promising selective areas should be focused upon which promise to match the majority of pupils' general abilities. Also, the contents must link with local universities' entrance requirements (section 2.5.5 and 8.2).
- 2) Teachers: Teaching methodology and technique should be easily understood. Related documents with guidelines and teaching resources should be provided (sections 4.1 and 6.3).
- 3) Students: The courses should be easy to follow which enable students to make their fullest possible development in accordance with their ages, abilities and aptitudes (sections 6.6 and 6.7).

To summarize, a sound music curriculum should possess the following characteristics:

### **8.2 A Sound Music Curriculum**

The researcher summarizes the suggestions provided by secondary school music teachers who replied. These are the main points:

A) Key Comments from the Questionnaires on the Contents of a Sound Music Curriculum

1. “It should be balanced.”
2. “Music contents for junior secondary level can be broader. For senior level, the contents can be more in-depth and concentrate on certain areas.”
3. “Different kinds of music should be included, e.g. Jazz and international music.”
4. “The curriculum should include listening, appreciation, history, theory and instrumental playing.”
5. “Listening / History: 40% (including Western and Chinese music)  
Theory: 20% Practical: 40% (e.g. singing, and drumming training)
6. “Pop music with composing: 50 %, Chinese music: 10%, Western music: 20%,  
Classical music: 20%
7. “A good music curriculum should be balanced for its content. Appropriate audio facilities for teaching and learning must be provided.”
8. “A good music curriculum should include Christian hymns, Western music, Chinese music, classical music, and popular music. Ideally speaking, it is a good idea for music as an independent school subject that schools and music teachers can decide what resources are necessary. This depends upon the school’s situation.”
9. “The contents should include Western music, Chinese music, instrument playing (both Western and Chinese), computer music, composing, fundamental theory and history.

B) Nature of the Course: a Sound Music Curriculum

1. “Creativity should be encouraged.”

2. "The curriculum should be diversified, and multi-dimensional with creativity."
3. "The music curriculum should be wide-included, and keep changing according to the continuous social development."
4. "A balanced music curriculum should include Western classical music, Chinese contemporary music and pop music."
5. "Wider scope: Western music, Chinese music, classical music, popular music (both Western and Hong Kong local music culture), and world music should be included. However, the course does not have to be difficult. The main goal is to cultivate students' interest so that they can understand the value of music (i.e. to appreciate music)."
6. "Traditional music must be kept and there should not be too much pop music in the music teaching books."
7. "Students can learn not only singing and instrumental knowledge, but classical music (include the Chinese and the Western) thus understanding music theory and transforming it into learning pop music."
8. "A good secondary school music curriculum should be diversified. It helps students to understand music through the multi-media and assists teachers to teach the techniques of composition and musical arrangement. On the other hand, to introduce pop music so that students will become more interested; let the students to learn about world music in order to broaden their musical knowledge; and stimulate students' initiative to active learning."
9. "More creativity and composing. Let the students understand the present development of contemporary music in Hong Kong, China and all over the world."
10. "General music courses should be enhanced in forms 4 to 7."



#### C) About Students' a Sound Music Curriculum

1. "Students should be given the opportunity to select certain learning areas such as theory, performance or music appraisal (for senior secondary level)."
2. "Students should have opportunities to learn different types of music so that they nurture their interest in musical learning."
3. "The most important factor is to raise the students' interest in music. First of all, to use popular music to attract their interest and then secondly, to teach them classical music."
4. "A good music curriculum should encourage students to develop their creative thinking through the learning of different types of music."
5. "To introduce and let the students to listen to different kinds of music thus to nurture their interest and habit to appreciate music."

#### D) Music Lessons: a Sound Music Curriculum

1. "Music lessons should be compulsory at form 1 to form 7, at least two lessons per week."
2. "The number of music lessons must be sufficient for teaching classical and Chinese music."
3. "Invite individual / private instrumental teachers to teach students to play musical instruments at school, e.g. flute and violin. Then let students learn theory, history and composition."
4. "It is not necessary to emphasis theory or music history learning, but to use some interesting topics to design the curricula and penetrate these elements with the relevant knowledge and technique. Students will be interested to learn and to gain the relevant knowledge through the process."

#### E) Other Comments: a Sound Music Curriculum

1. “The present curricula are too wide and dull.”
2. “The present secondary school music education is out-dated.”

On the other hand, further ideas are established:

1. Teachers’ and students’ feelings and expectations must be considered (sections 6.3, 6.6, 6.7 and 7.2).
2. Both teachers and pupils should find the curriculum interesting, valuable, useful, practical, up-to-date and the levels of difficulties are developed step by step, i.e. reasonably and acceptably (sections 6.3, 6.6, 6.7 and 7.2).
3. In-service training is important so that the teachers are well equipped (sections 3.3.8.7, 4.3.1, 6.2, and 6.3).
4. The requirement of the examination should be clear, focused and reasonable (sections 3.1, 6.3, 6.4, 6.6, 6.7 and 8.2).

It is understood that to achieve this goal, a carefully selected and well-planned curriculum becomes very important. Regelski wrote:

The many activities that constitute a year curriculum must be well selected and arranged.

To provide for maximum learning on the part of each individual. ... the activities making up a curriculum must be organized into a plan that provides for continuous and sequential learning for each music course. A general music curriculum should provide a continuous, well-planned sequence of learning experience.

(Regelski, 1975: 66-67)

As the new Arts Education curriculum for senior secondary schools (i.e. HKCEE/HKALE is introduced in 2005, some policy implications derived from reports from other countries which have experienced Arts Education research would be of use for reference (sections 3.4, 4.2.1 and 4.2.2). For example, the following are the policy implications suggested by the Arts Council of England:

- 1) For the full canon of effects from arts education to be available to pupils, all of the art-forms need to be provided in the school curriculum.
- 2) As a reflection of the most effective arts teaching and in recognition of their contribution beyond that of P.E. and English, dance and drama should be given comparable status in the National Curriculum to that of art and music.
- 3) In view of the critical problems facing music, there is an urgent need to tackle the quality of teaching in this subject – by mounting, for example, a program of continuing professional development (CPD) for music teachers, in which those teachers achieving high outcomes should play a leading role as models of effective practice.
- 4) The issues surrounding the lack of relevance perceived by pupils in some arts provision should be explicitly addressed in the programs of study for arts subjects.
- 5) There is a need to recruit and train teachers with specialist expertise in the arts and to encourage them to remain in the classroom by providing a career and CPD structure that offers regular opportunities for creative renewal.
- 6) Local consultation procedures between teachers of specific art-forms and agencies such as LEA advisers, Regional Arts Boards and arts organizations should be set up to develop the external support systems available to teachers’.
- 7) ITT providers should ensure that students teachers are aware of the outcomes associated with different approaches to teaching arts subjects, that the factors characteristic of effective teaching

8) are well covered in their courses and that sufficient time is available for student teachers to develop these practices.

*(Arts Education in Secondary Schools, 2000: 571-572)*

The researcher suggests that points 3 and 5 above are considered appropriate to the situation in Hong Kong. An Arts Education is a curriculum that is rich in content, quality teaching in Arts Education becomes important. However, to recruit teachers with specialist expertise, knowledge and skills in the whole field is very rare. To solve the problem, probably, sharing between schools will become a necessity: "Policies are required that seek improvements across the board and might include strategies that encourage schools with demonstrable strengths in achieving high-quality outcomes in arts education to aid and support developments in schools without those strengths."

*(Arts Education in Secondary Schools, 2000: 572)*. Not only if these issues are faced and tackled with care, it seems that the new Arts Education curriculum cannot embody the changes expected in that policy document.

To conclude, music as a school subject is now facing rapid change in Hong Kong and music will become one of the parts of Arts Education up to senior secondary school level in the coming years. To design a new restructured music syllabus under the 'umbrella' of Arts Education, policies may alter from treating music as an independent school subject, to a tool for enriching the wide contents of Arts Education. This seems unavoidable.

### **8.3 Conclusions**

This research had aimed at studying the HKCEE/HKALE music curricula in Hong Kong during the period 1998 to 2009. It hypothesized that the low number of HKCEE/HKALE music candidates is a result of the difficult development of the subject at secondary schools in Hong Kong and the general public's high neglect of school music education. Although music education has its value in making people conscious of their culture (section 3.3.1) and is valuable for students' personal development, historical and political factors can influence a school subject's development (section 2.5) and music is usually not considered as one of the important school subjects.

On the other hand, the free education policy in Hong Kong since 1971 and the compulsory education policy which started in 1979 have been influential on the development of general education as well as of music education at schools (chapter 2). However, the too wide and difficult contents of HKCEE/HKALE music syllabi are one of the major obstacles to the subject's development in secondary schools. For a promising development of the subject in the future, policy makers and syllabus planners may need to reconsider the problem since a new arts curriculum can influence the cultural education for students in Hong Kong (i.e. the Arts Education which includes music, dance, drama and visual arts). To provide a channel for secondary school music / arts teachers to express their ideas and feedback on the new coming Arts Education and listen to the problems they encounter is of prime importance for the coming reform.

As has been mentioned before, this research makes no effort to increase the number of

HKCEE/HKALE music candidates, nor does it intend to provide any solution to the existing problems. The intention merely lies in the provision of a context for studying the field. As Paynter remarks: “Education cannot hope to find an answer for every social problem, and it would be a pity if we make that an excuse for ignoring the humanizing influence of certain areas of the curriculum.” (Paynter, 1982: 29)

Most students find that academic subjects are already very heavy for them. Music as a school subject has little (or even no) practical use for their future career and the majority of students’ interest in the subject is relatively low (section 6.6 and 6.7). Also secondary school principals’ practical support is far from ideal (section 6.1) – although most of the principals who replied think that music is good for students, but the promotion of music at school faces a number of limitations. This is similar to the suggestions of the music teachers who replied (section 6.2). Probably the best way for the subject’s development on a school basis is that music teachers should not follow the syllabi, and should free their students to enjoy the classes as what they prefer (e.g. more popular music in the classroom, section 6.5). As a result, most secondary school music teachers do not follow the HKCEE/HKALE music curricula they found difficult and complex (section 6.2). Usually the music teachers look forward to the change in the subject curriculum with the introduction of Arts Education in 2005 (section 6.3).

Probably, any change is better than no change at all. A ‘better’ syllabus usually brings hope for a good change. A British county Music Adviser writes: “You cannot structure the development of the imagination and its expressive stimulus, and cannot therefore create anything faintly resembling a syllabus of work although it is essential

to know what work can be done at various ages / stages.” (Quoted by Paynter, 1982: 30)

### An Agreed Music Syllabus

No syllabus is perfect. An agreed music syllabus seems to be beyond reality. Then what should be the characteristics of a good syllabus? Some characteristics of an agreed syllabus may include: the contents are teachable (i.e. students will be expected to be able to do it); the contents are learnable with a positive and acceptable learning process; there should be reasonable ideal learning outcomes; the work can be undertaken by the majority of students; and the syllabus can be taught systematically (Fautley & Hutchinson, 1999: 22).

However, there is considerable disagreement about exactly what is a balanced music curriculum. For example some may argue that if the syllabus is not wide enough, essential elements of the subject may be left out. Probably, a balanced music curriculum with a good and not too wide syllabus can hardly exist at the same time. Paynter (1982: 63) doubted that it must be all or nothing. He thought that examples of various creative curriculum structures should be balanced with more traditional methods and wondered whether the music teacher should offer a balanced diet including all aspects of music. Whereas, how do we define the priorities? Will they be the same for every school? Should we take it for granted that a course will be balanced if it concentrates upon Western / Chinese music alone? Can we really afford to ignore the vast range of world music and the influences it has exerted upon our culture (Paynter, 1982: 65). These questions are interesting for further studies.

### A Balanced Curriculum

On the other hand, to form a balanced curriculum we must be sure that we are looking at the right things. We cannot do everything, but have to select. Music as a minor school subject, or as an extra-curricular activity, will probably gain its best way to develop on a school basis depending upon how music teachers select the teaching / learning contents and the method of assessment.

### **8.4 Recommendations for Further Research**

The continuing small number of HKCEE/HKALE music candidates in secondary schools in Hong Kong calls for the Hong Kong government's attention through the evaluation done for the subject. It was supposed that 'new' music syllabi would be introduced in 2001 but they were turned down. The new Arts Education was under discussion for 2005 but was also rejected.

Based on the findings given in the previous chapters, the problems associated with the secondary school music curriculum in Hong Kong appear to be insoluble. However, this is not to suggest that research in this area should be abandoned. Rather, in designing future work regarding this area, researchers should be aware of the difficulties inherent in the researching process. Curriculum development is not only a matter of devising a new syllabus, but also is linked to the study of methods – both should be considered in the context of defined objectives, followed by experimental work and systematic evaluation (Entwistle and Nisbet, 1972: 264). The present researcher suggests seven areas for continued research:



- 1) Hong Kong secondary school music curriculum needs a good and consistent leadership. Leadership should persistently seek to fulfill the mission and continue evaluation on the relevant strategy. Thus research in this field will be interesting and stimulating.
- 2) A team of researchers working on policy and curriculum planning in music as a school subject should have a comparatively consistent and stable nature. For example, in Northern Ireland, a five-year research project looking at the work of music teachers in secondary schools was carried out which considered the original inspirations for their choice of career and investigated which aspects of their work continue to motivate them (Drummond, 2001: 5). Learning from this experience, a consistent working team in the area of Arts Education development in Hong Kong may be of great value.
- 3) Further research in Arts Education in Hong Kong will be necessary, one can foresee, because of its newly established nature. The journal *Arts Education Policy Review* published by Heldref Publications (U.S.A.) is recommended for further study and reference.
- 4) The advantages of Arts Education could be an interesting topic for further research.
- 5) The provision of quality teachers for Arts Education would be a challenging topic.
- 6) The impact of the Arts Education on students' personal development could be a stimulating research topic.
- 7) The researcher wonders if Arts Education can really produce future artists" This is probably an interesting area: what are the aims behind Arts Education?

### **8.5 Further Limitations of the Study**

The difficulties that the researcher encountered in doing this research are that very limited resources can be found. In addition, for policy reasons and because of the unclear situation of the constantly changing curriculum, she was unable to collect the relevant official documents which are still under consultation. For these limitations, the researcher has had to gather on the spot data, select the most significant data, find useful materials and hints that are valuable, then finally form some main points leading her to:

- 1) transform the selected materials into useful guidelines and try to interpret the findings in a logical and clear way;
- 2) find out the up-dated situation of Hong Kong secondary schools music curriculum;
- 3) provide careful identification and observation with comparative clear analysis, synthesis, evaluation and comparison during the process of research; and
- 4) construct hypotheses and come to conclusions which make sense and are logical.

Following these directions and linking theory with practice, the researcher carefully selected the most significant sources to form the spine of her researching and tried her best to arrive at impartial findings and conclusions. Importantly, in planning the whole research process, the qualities of both processes and outcomes were considered. Looking at what is actually happening in the field at present was also important to the study in that variables may exist. In order to do this, the research sample was drawn from target secondary schools, examining the Centralized Scheme, the professionals in the field were interviewed, as were the principals of schools which enter their

students for the HKCEE/HKALE music examinations, teachers who teach the syllabi and students who take the examinations. People who are not involved with the curricula were not sampled. As a result, the scope of the study is confined to the persons related to the field of HKCEE/HKALE music examinations to avoid any unnecessary areas which may lead to a too broad or unrelated result.

## **8.6 Summary and Significance of the Study**

As has been mentioned before, this is the first time that any study has investigated the problems concerning secondary school music education in Hong Kong during the years 1998 to 2009. The core work of this research is to explore the factors directly influencing the number of candidates at of HKCEE/HKALE music examinations (chapter6). The aim of this research was formulated to transcend the restricted conditions of the development of music syllabi in Hong Kong (section 3.3.7). The points of view of the experts in the field (section 6.4), target secondary school principals (section 6.2), music teachers (section 6.3) and students (sections 6.6 and 6.7) were also collected. These may lead to a number of important implications for educators, arts education policy makers and practitioners in the field (chapters 6 to 8).

During the process of this research, the researcher has found that education in Hong Kong has been long being criticized as overloaded and academically oriented (section 2.1). There are six important education policy-making bodies responsible for local education policy (section 2.2). The system is complicated and bureaucratic, and different voices may turn down previous plans for changing the curriculum (Appendix VIII: The chairman of the Arts Education Committee and two members resigned

because the 2000 proposed music syllabi did not follow what had been planned and expected, even though the relevant investigation had been undertaken in the S.S.M.C. document published in 1998). Obviously, this not only has an impact on the people concerned in the field but also reflects a waste of resources.

Music education policy in secondary schools in Hong Kong has been highly neglected. Only a little information on the subject has been mentioned in the seven Education Commission Reports numbers 1 to 7 (1984 to 1997, section 2.3). Although universal belief that music education is good for students' personal development (section 2.5), in Hong Kong, the development of music education at secondary schools faces a number of limitations (chapter 3). Shortage of music textbooks (section 3.1.1), too wide and a difficult syllabus (section 3.1.2), and heavy requirement on the role of secondary school music teachers (section 4.3) are major obstacles for the subject's development at secondary schools. Besides, whether Arts Education being introduced in 2005 is a good substitute for the subject is still uncertain at this moment.

There is no definite solution to the issues highlighted in this research. Objective identification of the problems and analysis of the key factors in the field have been attempted. In addition, this research provides a basis for continuing the debate about how, why, when, and what to do in the coming 2005 Arts Education curriculum. The findings and recommendations of this research may be of use for generating discussion and reference for the status of music in Arts Education curriculum, especially for its intrinsic and immediate impacts.

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